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# BYEWAYS OF HISTORY,

FROM

E TWELFTH TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

TO WHICH IS NOW FIRST ADDED,

A SKETCH OF

*A Silesian Knight of the Sixteenth Century,*

FROM HIS DIARY, RECENTLY DISCOVERED

BY

MRS. PERCY SINNETT.

"Yet, I doubt not, through the ages one uncessing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widen'd, with the process of the suns."

TENNYSON.

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## PREFACE TO THE PRESENT EDITION.

The present edition has been carefully revised, and I have been enabled to add to it a very curious historical relic, in a sketch of the life and adventures of Sir Hans of Schweinichen, a Silesian knight of the sixteenth century, who passed many years in the service of the prodigal and spendthrift Duke Henry of Liegnitz and Brieg, with whom he went through a long course of rambling adventures, and traversed the German empire in all directions. Being, probably, more familiar with the pen than most German nobles of his time, as he had, in the course of his duty as *Hofmeister*, or master of the household, to keep many accounts; he also undertook and continued through many years a diary of his life, which affords a remarkable contribution to the history of manners and morals of the age in which he lived, as well as a pair of striking and life-like portraits of the simple-hearted autobiographer himself, and the jovial princely vagabond to whom he rendered such long, faithful, and disinterested service. The original MS. was discovered about thirty years ago in the Castle of Furstenstein in Silesia, and it was afterwards printed and published by the Silesian Historical and Antiquarian Society at Breslau.

The Diary has been compared to that of Pepys, as throwing the same light on the manners of the Germans of the sixteenth century, as the celebrated memoirs have done on those of the English under Charles II., but in personal character the old knight has greatly the advantage.

LONDON, December 24, 1853. .

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE purpose of this work will perhaps be sufficiently indicated by its title. It was, in the first instance, my intention merely to introduce to English readers the subject of the Peasant War of Germany, one of those interesting and important episodes which we sometimes meet with in rambling through what may be called the "Byeways of History," and which usually make us better acquainted with the true character of an epoch than a journey of greater extent along its beaten Highways. But in doing so I found it desirable, if not absolutely necessary, to glance at the previous condition of the society from which this fearful phenomenon arose.

The term "Byeways" may, I fear, be considered in some measure a misnomer, with respect to events that have filled so large a space in history as the conquests of the Teutonic Knights (the Masters of Prussia); but it may be referred perhaps rather to the humble rise, than to the meridian splendours, of the Order. I must plead guilty, however, to having been tempted rather further than necessary by the interest of the subject; I believe, I may add, its novelty to most English readers, and the illustration it affords of the power of a pure motive, even when struggling through the fogs and thick darkness of ignorance and fanaticism.

In conclusion, it is perhaps not altogether superfluous to add, since this little work is intended as a contribution, however trifling, to history, I should not think the slightness of its texture any excuse for departing, in the smallest instance, from the truth—as far as I have been able to ascertain it. In the legends of saints, &c., I need hardly say my object was not to represent the actual fact, but what appeared such in the ages in question.

I have subjoined a list of the sources of information to which I have applied, with the exception of one or two, which, having seen only in foreign public libraries, and neglected to note down, I am not now able to give with accuracy. For the account of the Peasant War, I have been principally indebted to Dr. Zimmerman's *Allgemeine Geschichte des Bauern-Krieges*, though I have consulted every authority that I could find on the subject.

LONDON, December, 1850.

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# BYEWAYS OF HISTORY.

## INTRODUCTION.

As antiquity was the childhood of the world, busying itself with the ever new delights of its freshly awakened senses, yet amidst a thousand aimless sports, often recognising by happy intuition the truths "which we are searching all our lives to find," the middle ages were its youth, with their pride in individual strength, their exuberant activity of fancy, thirst of action, effervescent passion, their crude notions of honour, and enthusiasm for what was great and noble, their fervent love and boundless reverence. A bold free spirit was abroad, bursting sometimes into frantic excesses, but manifesting itself also in virtues of which we have perhaps lost the measure.

One striking characteristic of those ages, once called the "dark," but more honourably distinguished since as "ages of faith," is the strong line of demarcation drawn between different classes of society. Our high and low and middling classes are now often like the North Sea, or the Bay of Biscay—only parts of the same great world-ocean; it is impossible to perceive the point where they meet it, for they are all mixed and confounded together in its multitudinous waters.



In the middle ages, the noble, the peasant, the citizen, the monk, were separated by strong barriers difficult to pass, impossible to overlook. Their education, their habits of life, were wholly different; their interests, apparently at least opposite; their paths of life lay widely apart. But for that all-pervading religious element in which they were all immersed, a cohesive force for which there is no substitute, it seems that the heterogeneous parts of the social fabric must have fallen asunder.

Chivalry, indeed, flaming forth from the united action of three great forces, religion, valour and love, concentrated into one burning focus, fused together many discordant elements, and shed a splendour not its own upon the feudal system, which in its turn served to secure and consolidate the more ethereal essence of chivalry; but both are so intimately connected, that it is scarcely possible to consider the one without the other. We must not forget, however, that what is known of the one is certain and unquestionable; of the other, more than half fable; and on looking closely into the facts even of the history of chivalry, much of the glory thrown round it by poetry and romance entirely vanishes, and its real annals remain prosy and melancholy enough. It seems unlikely that more than a very few, even of those who professed it, were ever really actuated by its pure spirit; and even the whole body of the knights of Europe was a very inconsiderable number compared with that of the classes whom they trampled in the dust, whom the knight regarded as of no more worth than his dog or his fideon, beyond comparison less than his war horse.\*

The peculiar features by which successive ages are distinguished, present themselves more or less prominently in various countries. As the "monarchy of the middle classes" might perhaps best be studied in England at the present day, or the era of cabinet and court ascendancy in the history of France, during the eighteenth century, so the characteristic features of European society, from the 12th to the 16th centuries, are in no other country so

\* Amongst the crusaders at Jerusalem, the ransom of a war horse was three times as much as for a serf.

strikingly presented as in Germany. The similarity of religious and political institutions, and of the relative position of various classes of society throughout Europe during the ages in which it prevailed, produce indeed a certain uniformity of character to whatever country we turn (a uniformity which steamboats and railroads are bidding far to bring about by quite a different method for the next generation). But nowhere else did that system of society continue so long, or leave such strong and enduring traces—traces which are, indeed, still perceptible in the character and manners of the people—in the condition of the peasantry, and in many still subsisting institutions, as to the eye in the innumerable ruins scattered over the German soil, which neither storm, nor lightning, nor the fury of man, nor the swift ravages of fire, nor the slow tooth of time, have yet been able to destroy.

The change in the condition of the bulk of the German people from that which is described in the earliest records to what we find it in the middle ages and down to the seventeenth century or later, is so great, and so incomparably for the worse, that it is difficult to believe it was not the effect of some violent and overwhelming conquest, instead of being brought about step by step by a series of events whose consequences were not foreseen, and by the gradual encroachments of one class upon another. In the earliest time in which we find mention of the Germans, they seem to have resembled in their manners and mode of life the present inhabitants of the Asiatic steppes—a nomadic race, living by pasturage and hunting, roving about with their flocks and herds, and wives and children, but having also something like the organisation of an army; being divided into companies and squadrons, and every man being bound to attend his chief in war. At a subsequent period, when they had laid aside their wandering habits, and made thus one step in advance towards civilisation, society among them assumed a form of which a tolerably correct parallel may be seen at the present day among the tribes of the Caucasus.

The land was divided in equal portions amongst the

free warriors, and every man dwelt upon his own estate or *allod*, no such thing as a town or even a village existing over the whole country. The houses stood in the middle of the land, surrounded by fields, meadows, and woods; they consisted mostly of one great wooden shed or barn, in the midst of which was the hearth, regarded as the seat of honour, and the sanctuary of the wife, exactly as it is now in the tents of the Tatars. In the dwellings of the most opulent, a separate house was frequently erected for the exclusive use of the women,\* a custom afterwards continued in many of the feudal castles. There was also attached to it a "house of sacrifice," and sheds for cattle, horses, and corn and for the abodes of the slaves. The *allod* was the inviolable property of the owner; no one had a right so much as to enter it without his permission, and any offence offered to him within its limits had to be expiated three-fold. Even on the commission of a serious crime, it was not lawful for any one to enter a man's house to take him, though in such a case the house might be set on fire. Laws were made by great assemblies of the people held in the open air (as they now are in Circassia), and the German of those days acknowledged no law that he had not helped to make. They are accused even of having been in their love of freedom unruly to excess, "*non juberi non regi, sed cuncta ex libidine agere*."

Forest and river were in those days the property of all, and all disputes were settled by judges chosen by the majority of voices of the people themselves in the great national assemblies, the grounds of choice being, not birth but admired personal qualities, such as valour, long experience, or even sometimes, for property will have influence, the possession of great wealth in flocks, or land. The dukes mentioned as existing then were merely leaders in war, chosen when they were wanted for that occasion only, every free man being equally eligible for the office.

In following the fate of nations, it is easier than in that

\* It was called the *Frauen Haus*, or *Frauenzimmer*, and the word has continued in use, though with a curious change of meaning, as it now signifies not the woman's dwelling, but the woman herself.

of individuals to trace the course of the avenging Nemesis—to see how even-handed justice “doth commend the ingredients of their poisoned chalice to their own lips,” when they have done evil ; or reward with full measure, pressed down and running over, whatever seeds of wisdom or genuine goodness have been sown. A nation, it has been truly said, always deserves its fate ; and perhaps none ever inflicted a wrong upon another without by that very act bringing evil on itself. Even in those comparatively happy days of freedom, to which we cannot wonder that “Young Germany,” entangled in bureaucratic meshes, often looks back with fondness ; even then there existed, it seems, a canker in the state in the shape of a class of men reduced to slavery. They were mostly prisoners of war, the inhabitants of districts invaded as the great Germanic tribes moved westward. As they extended their conquests, the relations of the Germans among themselves underwent many changes. It was not found expedient that the chiefs or kings, who had before possessed their power only for a limited period, should retain it permanently, for war was almost incessant. The affections of the people were of course little interested in the soil they so frequently abandoned to invade the richer possessions of their neighbours, but were concentrated on the leader who could guide them to victory and pillage, and help them to retain possession of the countries they had seized. By the time they were settled in their new dominions, they were also more widely scattered, and it was found inconvenient to call the people together as before, to deliberate on all matters concerning the public welfare. The chiefs, therefore, mostly met and deliberated in their stead ; and the people seeing nothing of the consequences of this and similar departures from ancient custom, cared apparently little about the matter, and lived on as yet unmolested on their own farms, and cultivated their own fields.

There are few lessons of history more certain than that no class ever long possessed power without misusing it. “We are sinners all,” and there is perhaps no permanent security against the abuse of authority, but the knowledge and vigilance of those over whom it is to be exercised.

In the reign of Charlemagne, Counts were appointed over each of the far-extending *gauen* or districts now occupied by the Germans. They were to regulate all ordinary affairs on their own authority, and only appeal to the assembly of great leaders on important occasions; and the task of raising the national militia or *heerbann* with which they were intrusted, was easily turned into a source of further power and profit to themselves. The Count often released from the obligation of attendance such freemen as were willing to pay good fees for the privilege of exemption, or who would consent to hold their land in dependence upon him; and he took care to summon, again and again, such as refused compliance.

Sometimes the poorer freemen would attempt to compromise matters by voluntarily performing for their powerful neighbour certain services—helping to cultivate his lands, or get in his harvests; but in these cases a claim was sure to be soon set up for such services as a matter of right. To enable them to support these and other encroachments the nobles found it expedient to collect around them bands of armed followers, easy to be maintained by exactions from the very men whom they helped to oppress.

The struggles of the Carlovingian race increased the power of the nobles; for many a free peasant's farm was laid waste in these quarrels, and the owner and his family had to sell themselves to slavery to escape starvation. As the sovereign also, anxious to increase the number of his adherents, was willing to grant almost all the demands of his great vassals, they easily found means to appropriate districts which they had been originally appointed to administer for the Crown.

The condition of the people of course grew worse every day; the land which had been formerly sufficient for the support of a freeman and his family would not enable him to meet the ever new exactions to which he was exposed; and he was often compelled to exchange, of his own accord, his nominal freedom for the service and protection of some powerful lord of a neighbouring castle; for by this time most of the counts and nobles

had built themselves strongholds in which they and their misdeeds might find a refuge. Where the peasant had made no voluntary resignation of freedom, the most simple relations in which he stood to the noble were often forged into fetters for his unsuspecting ignorance. Little presents, made from time to time with a view to purchase the good-will of a powerful neighbouring noble, were counted as tokens of vassalage, and claimed as rightful tribute. We look further on, and find matters ever growing worse with him. In another century or two the peasant has to furnish to his lord not only money taxes, but contributions in cattle, skins, meat, poultry, fish, corn, wine, eggs, oil, malt, beer, honey, wax, cheese, flax, hemp, hay, &c. The death of the owner of the estate often costs the peasant his best garment or his handsomest cow; and for the entrance of the successor, as well as for every son that comes of age, the peasant must still pay! Of every animal in the farm-yard—foals, calves, lambs, pigs, kids, geese, fowls, and even bees—tribute was demanded; and for the various kinds of forced labour, on the chase, in the forest, for the erection of castles—“*Jagdfröhen*,” “*Baufröhen*,” “*Forst-dienste*,” and so forth—so much time was required that one cannot well imagine how any was left. On many special occasions also—on visiting the emperor's court, on the marriage of a daughter, or the knighthood of a son—extraordinary contributions were demanded; the nobles were not ashamed to throw on the peasant even the expenses of their attendance at the diet; and on all occasions they measured their demands merely by their own wants or their greediness, without the slightest regard to the capabilities of the payer.

In the contests between the temporal and spiritual powers, the iron hand of war tore asunder the few feeble restraints on violence and injustice that still existed.

Of the state of private morals among the German nobles, a significant hint is given in the truce effected by Frederick II. “Whatever son shall drive his father from his castle with fire and sword, or shall attack, wound, or imprison his father, shall forfeit his fief, and be

regarded as dishonoured and an outlaw." The terrible Secret Tribunal also was, it is known, regarded at first in the light of a remedial measure.

Private declarations of war were recognised among ordinary legal remedies, not only for princes and knights, but for courtiers and men in office, and even for merchants and traders. Some of these are still extant; as that of the bakers of the Margrave of Baden, against the towns of Esslingen and Reutlingen in 1450; of the bakers of the Palatinate against the cities of Ulm and Augsburg; of the journeymen shoemakers of Leipsig against the University in 1471. Naked physical force, or what was well named *faust-recht*, that is, *fist law*, became openly the law of the land.

To facilitate the carrying on of these feuds, the princes and nobles began to take into their service hordes of *lanzknechts*, mercenary soldiers, who were dismissed as soon as the war was over, and had no resource, when their money was spent, but highway robbery or mendicancy; for, as a writer of the sixteenth century observes,—“Every *lanzknecht* seems to have taken an oath that, when he has once shouldered his lance, he will never do a day's work again.” \* \* “It is a *do nobody any good* race that runs about unmasked, unsought, to breed war and misfortune. The subjects whom obedience to their lords hath carried to the wars, when they are completed return again, and sit down to their work; but this unchristian and lost rabble, whose trade is robbing, murdering, hacking, hewing, burning, drinking, gaming, and blaspheming—making widows and orphans, rejoicing in every man's sorrows, nourished by every man's wrongs, is, whether in or out of war, the plague of all the world. They ask not of justice; but if the devil should offer them good pay, would swarm about him like flies in summer.” \*

The year 1495 is usually considered as the epoch of the abolition of the *faustrecht*, and the commencement of the settlement of disputes by legal decision; but the benefits of the “Perpetual Peace” were almost confined to the estates of the empire; and it was not till several years

\* Sebastian Frank.

afterwards that the citizens and peasants were allowed to claim its protection even against such nobles, knights, and prelates as were not their liege lords. That they should claim any rights against those who were, does not seem to have been even contemplated; and for the restraints to which the lord was now subjected in his intercourse with his equals, he not unfrequently made himself amends by tightening the yoke on his unhappy vassals.

The whole burden of the contributions for the expenses of the empire fell on the peasantry and the cities, for the nobles and clergy contributed nothing; whilst, at the same time as the demands were made to the estates of the empire only, and the manner in which the taxes were to be collected from the people was left entirely to them, the electors, princes, and counts did not fail to make a little profit of their agency, and often included in their charges not only their own and their proxies' necessary expenses at the diet, but even a "consideration" for their services. From the net of rents, taxes, duties, and claims for forced labour spread over him, the peasant had as little as ever the means of escaping, and if the lord wished to stretch his exactions beyond even what then were their legal limits, the doctors of the Roman law now came to his assistance, and extended to the German peasant the principles of a state of slavery from which it was pretended he had proceeded, and he found himself thus oppressed by a double despotism—by open arbitrary power, and by a law which was often but the same flagrant injustice in a petrified form.

Thus a country, endowed by nature with everything needed for the wants or the enjoyment of man, exhibiting every varied beauty of mountain, stream, woodland, and fertile plain, watered by glorious rivers, bringing forth with bounteous increase every seed committed to her bosom—this fair land came by degrees to be cultivated by a wretched race, whose ceaseless toil scarcely procured them the means of a coarse and joyless existence.

The people of Germany consisted towards the end of the fifteenth century "of a multitude of slaves and their drivers—slaves drilled to perform certain tasks for the



use and benefit of their masters, living on their native soil like foreigners, strangers in their own house, like Ulysses sitting at the threshold of his own palace, and receiving the bones and morsels thrown to him by those who were revelling within upon his substance.\*

In watching the slow extinction of the light of freedom in Germany—in seeing the tyranny of the nobles becoming ever harsher, the slavery of the people more hopeless, and that every fresh encroachment placed in the hands of the oppressor fresh instruments of wrong—we are naturally led to ask, what counteracting principles of good were at work amidst all this evil, by which men might at least live and struggle on? for no society can subsist upon mere mephitic vapour and choke damp; some pure and wholesome air must breathe in, or it will perish.

It seems to have proceeded from two sources; first, from the religious spirit, which, sometimes flaming up in splendour and far shooting radiance, sometimes flickering faint and low, was never wholly extinguished; and, secondly, from the discovery that in courage, self-reliance, and brotherly co-operation, there is always hope—a discovery embodying itself in the rise of the free cities,—the free cities which were and are, and are to be, the centres of the national health and strength of Germany, behind whose walls and towers civil liberty took root and flourished—where the noble “ceased from troubling,” and the weary peasant was at rest.

The power of the church has been mentioned as among the chief causes of the misery and depression of the people; but the truth of this assertion depends much on the period under consideration.

In many cases it was not so much an original source of many of the evils in question, as itself contaminated by the influence and example of the nobility. The younger branches of their families who crowded its ranks brought with them habits and tempers very ill-suited to their profession, and occasioned many corruptions and abuses, especially in the convents; but it is probable that they rather improved than deteriorated under the discipline to

\* “Allgemeine Geschichte des Bauern Kriegs.”

which, more or less, they were compelled to submit. The state of morals in the convents bad, as it often was, was at all events not worse than in the lay societies of the period; and if we are more shocked at it, it must be because we assume that these institutions afforded means of improvement which their inmates might have used if they would. We cannot in that case regard the system of monasticism in itself as a necessary cause of corruption; for, if it were, these immoralities would be not more but less the subjects of animalversion, being rather the consequences of a fatal error of the understanding, than of depravity of the will. Such an excuse, however, is hardly admissible; for that, however unsuitable to a later age, they were adapted to the wants of an earlier period, and capable of affording the means of pure religious culture, there is proof enough. Our judgment of the character and influence of monasticism will, however, depend much on time and place; their chief mistake, perhaps, was the attempt to preserve unchanged their outward form, for in this world all bodily forms are destined to decay. In the middle ages monasticism seems often to have afforded the most suitable embodiment of the religious spirit. While popes and prelates were contending with temporal princes for worldly power and wealth, the monks were often devoting themselves, with the most disinterested zeal, to the cause of Christianity, burying themselves in the depth of woods, and travelling alone through pathless wildernesses to carry its glad tidings to nations yet in the darkness of heathenism. It was to the church that Europe was indebted for the first great effort made for the restraint of the fierce private warfare by which it was distracted. In the "Peace of God," as it was called, it was declared sinful to carry on a feud on the days that had been hallowed by the death and the resurrection of the Saviour. Whoever should break the peace between Thursday evening and Monday morning should be liable to the ban. Blessing and honour to him who first bethought himself of this expedient for charming to rest the angry passions of the world, and pouring balm into its wounds in spite of itself—even though, clothing his beneficent intentions in the costume of his time, he

declared he had found an injunction to that effect, in a written paper that had fallen from heaven at the foot of the Pyrenees.

The abuses of the Catholic Church are sufficiently notorious; they have employed hundreds of pens for hundreds of years; the vices of her clergy early enough attracted attention, animadversion, and biting satire; and the often ludicrous contrast of their pretensions and their practice, not seldom hatred and contempt. But it was assuredly not by these abuses and these vices that she acquired her astonishing power. Through all these there was obviously something for the affections of men to lay hold of; truths deep as the foundations of the world, high as the eternal stars, towards which, through all confusion, clouds, and darkness, they might still struggle on.

It was not till this light had become obscured almost to extinction, till "the salt wherewith the earth was salted had lost its savour," that the social evils of the middle ages became altogether unendurable.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE CASTLES OF GERMANY AND THEIR INMATES.

So much has been said about feudal castles in general, and about those of Germany in particular, that there is little to be added that is not familiar ; but it is necessary before proceeding further to take a glance at them, since no outward circumstance is so significant of the character and mode of life as the habitation ; and did all other records fail, the remains of the feudal castles of Germany would speak to us, trumpet-tongued, of the history of their inmates. It is impossible to look at their walls, and ditches, and bastions, and notice the obvious disregard of air and light, health and convenience, of every consideration, in comparison with strength, without feeling the violence and insecurity of the age in which they were erected ; to gaze up at the all but inaccessible heights and naked crags on which they stand, without being reminded of the toil and groans of the oppressed peasants by whose forced labour they were placed there ; at their dark dungeons and hidden recesses, descending sometimes several stories below the ground, without thanking God that "the age of chivalry is past," and that no captive can again sigh out his life unknown and unpitied amidst their noisome vapours.

Numerous as these ruins still are, many have almost wholly vanished, scarcely one stone being left upon another ; others have nothing more than a fragment or two of an old wall, overgrown with shrubs and creeping plants, vaults and wells choked with dust, or ramparts and ditches covered with a thick carpet of verdure ; comparatively few of the more ancient are perfect enough for the original plan to be clearly traced.

The oldest of these castles seem to have been built about the seventh or eight centuries, partly on the model of the Roman castles on the Rhine and Danube, and many were originally intended as balwarks against the incursions of Northmen, Wends, and Hungarians, then pressing in on Germany from the east and north. They were often, at first, built merely of clay and wood instead of stone; but they served to bar the progress of the rude tribes by whom they were attacked, while there were, as yet, no cities in existence in Germany, and justified, in some measure, their title of *burg*,—a word signifying shelter or protection. But they appear to have been soon enough diverted from their original purpose, and to have served to injure instead of protecting the surrounding country. Castles soon rose rapidly on all sides, so rapidly that pope and emperor issued ordinances to prevent their erection without express permission. But the authority of distant monarchs availed little against the wild spirit of the time; they continued to increase, and then again others were built ostensibly to protect the people from such as were already in existence.

In some places, the ruins of ten or twelve may be counted within the circuit of as many miles. Some lie hidden in dark woods, as if obviously intended for deeds that would not bear the light; but others are situated in the midst of the most exquisite landscapes, of which, from the mode of their construction, however, the inmates could, from the interior, have seen about as much as if they had lived in a coal cellar. The lordly owner, indeed, when he looked down from his battlements upon the beautiful panorama which frequently opens around them, was not occupied, like our own much despised modern tourist, with some simple observations on their picturesque beauties, but often with purely utilitarian considerations of the amount of booty to be obtained from travellers likely to pass that way, or perhaps of the amount of force which a rival captain of banditti could bring against him. As soon as a cortège came in sight, the warder blew his horn and down he came, swooping from his airy height, like the royal eagle or the knightly vulture upon lambs and chickens; and, unless the travellers made too stout a

defence, came back laden with spoil, trumpets sounding and horses neighing, and "made a night of it" by drinking and carousing till the cock crew. Sometimes the booty was not the goods of travellers or merchants, but cattle taken as a pledge from the peasants for taxes they had not been able to pay, or stolen from the serfs of a neighbouring baron, with whom the knight was at feud.

In great states, like Austria or Bavaria, we hear fewer complaints of these robber knights than in Franconia, Swabia, and the countries of the Rhine, where the division of territory was greater. In some few instances, as in the territories of the powerful counts of Hohenlohe, the castles appear to have been really looked up to as a source of protection by the people. The more ancient castles of Germany varied greatly in their character from those erected in the latter end of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which were more stately and palace-like, and with slight variations for climate and locality, castles of the same date, were in their general features, pretty much the same from one end of Europe to the other. The arrangement and destination of their several parts was everywhere the same; whether the great hall were strewn, as in Germany, with straw or rushes; or, as in Italy, with laurel leaves; or, as in Norway, with small twigs of the juniper-tree, it was employed everywhere for the same purposes, and held the same rank in the domestic economy. Some, called "water castles," were built on low flat grounds and surrounded either by streams or by a broad moat; others were built on a bold headland or rocky eminence, with a dry ditch cut across the point where they were easiest of access. They were all encircled with a solid stone wall: the entrance was defended by low towers, and between the outer and inner walls was a space corresponding with what in the English castles was called a Bailey. In Germany it bore the name of *Zwinger*, that is, "narrow confined space;" but something like an air of cheerfulness was now and then imparted to it, by the presence of a few lime-trees and a bit of smooth green turf. A part was mostly enclosed for the stables, cattle-yard, and various domestic offices, and a tower in the outer wall was placed for its especial defence. The *Zwinger* was frequently made

use of for the practice of various knightly exercises, and between it and the castle often lay another wall and another ditch, wet or dry, crossed by a drawbridge. This led to a second gate or port, also most jealously defended; and round the interior of the second wall ran a covered passage, open towards the castle, but having only loopholes in the outer side to shoot arrows through, and where heaps of stones were kept ready wherewith to batter the heads of assailants. When bridge and port were passed, the courtyard surrounding the castle itself was gained, though in some cases there was even a second Zwinger. Where there was no moat filled with water, it was often necessary to leave horses in the first Zwinger, and, descending on foot into the ditch, to re-ascend by a narrow winding path. The outer gate also was, in many mountain castles, not on the ridge of the promontory on which the castle was built, but at a considerable distance from it, on the side of the mountain, and connected with it by a steep narrow passage enclosed by high walls. The inner port gave entrance, in large castles, to a sort of hall, defended by a portecullis, and open at both ends, so that horsemen could ride through it; and this, being an airy place, was much used for drying fishing-nets and for similar purposes.

Of the buildings composing the castle itself, the hall generally occupied one whole side of the court-yard; and royal and princely castles, where it was necessary to accommodate many hundreds of knights at a time, generally had more than one hall. It was not uncommon to see a good deal of pains expended in ornamenting the roof: in Italy various kinds of coloured marbles were used, and in Germany, where this was not to be had, coloured tiles or slates; for it was considered a great point that the roof of the great hall should, if possible, be seen glittering afar off into the country. A flight of steps led up to the hall the floor of which was at a considerable height above the ground, and the half subterranean space beneath served for keeping stores of various articles. On the same level as the hall were a few smaller chambers leading from it, but the halls only had the advantage of fire-places. As the walls were of immense thickness, the windows formed deep niches, which were regarded as places of honour, and

mostly reserved for ladies, for whom these window seats, and similar ones in the battlements of the outer wall, appear to have been favourite places of resort. In many parts of Germany, however, it was the etiquette for ladies to appear in the great hall only on festal occasions.

Traces of the style of building just described may still be seen, not only in the castles, but in citizens' houses in the north of Germany, where it is by no means uncommon to find a great hall occupying more than half of the entire space allotted to the house, and having a row of little insignificant rooms on either side; in the farmers' houses, it is of course the place for culinary operations, as well as the family sitting-room, and among all the northern nations, it is always the centre of domestic life and business. The floor of the hall, as well as of the smaller chambers, in the ancient feudal castles, was of stone; but in the summer it was the practice to strew fresh roses daily upon it, and on very grand occasions it was covered with a kind of carpeting, and the walls hung with tapestry. Broad benches ran all round it, on which cushions could be laid, and at night the hall could be lit, not only by the blaze from one or more spacious fire-places, but by waxlights in candelabras.

Quite apart from the hall and from any place inhabited by men, lay a building, either a tower or not, as the case might be, called the women's house, and devoted to their special use; and as it was in many places not etiquette for the women to appear unsummoned in the hall, so it was strictly forbidden to any male visitor, however friendly his reception, to enter these sacred precincts without special invitation. The building consisted of three chambers, in one of which lived and slept the mistress, with her nearest female relatives, and here all confidential intercourse was carried on; in the second were lodged the attendants, and here stood sometimes as many as thirty-two beds, in which were deposited no fewer than sixty-four damsels; the third was devoted to various kinds of work performed either by the women only, or with the assistance of male domestics.

The kitchen also was a separate building, and of course spacious, since it not only served for all the cooking ope-



rations of the household, but for the dwelling and sleeping place of the chief cook and his whole cabinet of ministers and attendants, who were always of the masculine gender, in the castles of all but the poorest of the nobility and simple knights, where the *hausfrau* and her maids took this office on themselves. The manners of the cooks appear to have been much more free and disorderly than those of the other, probably less well-fed, menials, who held less important posts.

Since the whole household and the immense train of servants had to receive board, lodging, and clothing, in the castle, and since it was customary, in the German castles, to provide guests, not only with linen, but even with mantles, immense store-rooms must of course have been needed to keep such a stock as was equal to all these demands, where there was so little opportunity of obtaining a fresh supply of any article required. The estates generally produced flax, wool, and skins enough for the consumption of the castle, and these raw materials were all spun, woven, and prepared within the walls; and for all these operations a great deal of room was required, as well as for the making, mending, and keeping in good order the stock of crossbows, lances, and other weapons. This sort of work was generally carried on in the broad, low towers that served for the defence of the outer walls.

The chapel was of course never wanting in a castle of any considerable extent, but perhaps the most essential of all, since many consisted of nothing else, was the tower called in English the Donjon keep, and in German the *Berchfrit*. It was generally placed on the boldest projection that could be found; sometimes on an artificial elevation, and kept clear of all the other buildings, so as to afford a place of refuge in case the castle were taken or fired. The only entrance to it was at a considerable height from the ground, and was reached by a ladder; this gave admittance to the kitchen; whence a narrow winding staircase ascended to the upper part of the tower, where were a few small chambers, or sometimes only niches in the wall, for sleeping-places for the inmates; air and light could find entrance only through

narrow loop-holes in walls of immense thickness ; and the lower part of the tower, generally used as the prison, had absolutely none but what reached it through a trap-door from the kitchen above. In this space, also, there was usually a well.

From such information as we possess of the domestic life of the dwellers in these castles, it appears that they were not in the habit of taking more than two regular meals in the day ; the one shortly after matins, the other, which was the principal, after the business of the day was over—very much the same arrangement as our own, since late dinners have been usual, for such at least as do not solace themselves with a very solid luncheon in the interim.

These two meals were of course taken in the hall, where, after the conclusion of the services of the church, the lord and lady of the castle, or the lord only, with his guests and servants, assembled, generally some little time before the meal was served, and, in this interval, basins of water were handed round with napkins, for the purpose of washing the hands of the party—a ceremony we may imagine by no means superfluous. The tables, which were put aside after every meal, were then brought forward ; and, even at a very early period, in Germany, covered with white cloths ; and on them were placed loaves of black and white bread, and vessels with salt and vinegar. The carving was usually performed by a squire ; but when particular honour was to be shown to a guest, by the lady of the castle, or her daughter, kneeling ; and a ballad of the beginning of the thirteenth century\* mentions their frequently taking this opportunity to bestow on their favourites certain dainty morsels on pieces of bread. Wine was seldom drunk pure, but was mixed with spices, fruit, and the juices of various plants, and a potion of this kind was sent hot to a guest after he had retired to bed.

Unlike those of modern Germany, the bedsteads, or at

\* "Der Parzival," by Wolfram von Eschenbach, written in 1205.

all events those for the principal members of the family, were high and spacious, and furnished with a *plumacium*, or feather cushion, of what dimensions does not appear, a mattress, a sheet, and a coverlet made of skins, or of several folds of cloth sewed together, and sometimes, as well as the feather cushion, covered with silk or velvet.

Where the accommodations were not quite so good, the guest covered himself merely with his mantle; and when the castle was full, although there were beds in all the smaller chambers, the broad benches of the hall had to serve the purpose.

The attendance at table, on the persons of the guests, and other kinds of service performed in modern households exclusively by menial servants, belonged, in the period of which we are speaking, to the pages and esquires, the younger branches of noble families, who were placed in great households with a view to their education in such exercises and accomplishments as were deemed desirable. Noble young gentlemen, who would not, to save their lives, have employed themselves in any sort of useful art or manufacture, had no objection to lay cloths, carry up dishes, wait at table, hold horses and lead them to the stables; and noble young ladies did not disdain to perform many of the offices of a chambermaid at a hotel, for a knightly guest. Besides services of this kind, there was also a great deal of real hard work to be done in the castle, for which many hands were necessary. The wardrobes of the whole household were usually under the immediate superintendence of the lady and her maids, assisted occasionally by masculine tailors; and clothes had not merely to be made up, but the raw materials for them, flax, linen, and wool, to be prepared, woven, and spun. Shoemakers, who dressed the leather which they used, as well as brewers and bakers, were among the regular menials; the care of the horses fell to the retainers who followed their lord to the field; for the fisheries, gardens, beehives, &c., on which the family depended for their supply of vegetables, fruit, honey, wax, and fish, a great number of persons were required, as well as for fetching water and fuel, and performing other

operations which the mechanical improvements and domestic conveniences of modern times have rendered so much less toilsome.

In the households of the poorer nobility and knights, everything of course was on a smaller scale ; the multifarious offices of the numerous *personnel* in the castle of a wealthy noble had to be performed by the family themselves, with a few serving men in the stables and offices, and women as ministers of the interior.

As hospitality and a general readiness to give, whether for purposes of charity or friendship, were among the virtues imperatively required of a noble of those times, reception of guests is a subject often alluded to in the poems and ballads of the thirteenth century. No sooner was the approach of a knightly visiter announced, than forth rushed page and squire to help him to dismount, and lead him to a chamber where his armour was taken off, and he was furnished with the means of washing—necessary enough when we consider the quantity of dust that entered at the openings of his helmet, or beneath the rings or crevices of his armour, and the heat produced by the violent exercise he had mostly been taking. Sometimes, instead of mere washing apparatus, a complete bath is mentioned, which, in summer, was rendered elegant and luxurious by the addition of immense quantities of rose-leaves, and the guest was also furnished with under linen and a mantle. When dressed, he was conducted to the hall, unless the extraordinary favour was shown of introducing him to the part of the castle occupied by the ladies ; those of high rank often having a "*palas*" or hall of their own for reception. When the castle was full of company, which was often the case at many stated festivals, as well as at weddings and other private occasions of rejoicing, the hall and the court must have presented a very gay scene, with the groups of knights and stately dames, exhibiting their gorgeous attire on the grass beneath the lime-trees, or passing up and down the broad flights of steps that led to the hall, or occupied with various diversions, dancing, singing, running, leaping, shooting at a mark, or practising more warlike diver-

sions.\* But now—"all lonely and wild are these roofless abodes;" unless, peradventure, they are peopled sometimes—to the infinite delight of the tourist—with airy shapes and beckoning shadows drear—white gentle virgins or wandering fiery knights—skeletons without heads, black fierce dogs rattling chains, or frail dames whose husbands having returned unexpectedly and *mal-à-propos* from Palestine, have, in revenge for one false step, been ever since forcing them to make a hundred, over fearful precipices into unimaginable gulphs.

In some no spectres, but only owls and vultures, foxes or ravens, and vermin of every kind, including robbers and coiners, have found a hiding-place. In others, the silence and desolation have given place to the hum of innocent life, the voices of peasant women and their babes. Among the scattered fragments of the castle of Hapsburg, a herdsman with his wife and children, and little flock of goats, have, or had a few years ago, found an asylum. From many of the spacious courts, once thronged with the gorgeous array of rank and chivalry, cottagers now gather in their peaceful harvest of potatoes, glad to have found a spot where they can live rent-free, and heedless of the danger to which they are exposed from the frequent falling of stones from the old walls; and round their frowning battlements all-beautifying, all-sanctifying nature has thrown her lovely robe, hiding beneath her gardens, and vineyards, and orchards, all traces of the crimes and the barbarism of man, and turning into food for sweet and bitter fancies

\* A ballad in the Old German dialect describes, in the following manner, the modes of passing the time, customary on these occasions:—

"Disc sprachen wider din wip,  
 Disc tanzten, disc sungen,  
 Disc liefen, disc sprungen,  
 Disc horten seitspeil,  
 Disc schutzen zwo dem zil,  
 Disc retten seneder arbeit,  
 Disc von grözen mannhait  
 Gawein ahte uf wafen."

even the memorials of violence and spiritual darkness. "The ages of chivalry are gone."—*Requiescant in pace.*

It has been said by one,\* in a book written expressly to the praise and glory of the nobility, that they are not so much the pillars of the state, as the caryatides, upon whose shoulders the building appears to rest, but which are in reality only ornaments that conceal the real supports. "Save me from my friends," says the proverb—this is little less than saying that their claims rest only on fraud and false pretension. Even those who by no means regard an hereditary nobility as an indispensable part of the social fabric, may be slow to join in this opinion; and it is impossible to deny that in the chaotic state of the middle ages, this class often rendered essential service. The feudal laws, at least in their origin, involved the idea of a mutual obligation of duty between lord and vassal, very different from the abject stupid submission of Oriental slavery; but in the institution of knighthood an order of merit was introduced, giving rise to distinctions opposed to those of mere birth, and requiring a course of discipline, often so effectual in calling forth high qualities, that were the classes under its influence alone in question, we might almost find cause to admit, that the former days were indeed "better than these."

The young noble of the middle ages, whether the son of a poor knight or of a prince, was generally taken in his seventh year out of the hands of the women, to commence his education, as all education should commence, by obedience—by serving for seven years as a page in the household of a noble who had already received the honour of knighthood. He had to wait upon his master, his lady, and their guests at table, in the chase, and on journeys—and in the intervals of these duties, to acquire the necessary knowledge and practice of knightly exercises. He was placed under the authority of a sort of schoolmaster, who, however, was, in Germany at least, not called a tutor, but a *buben-zuchtmeister*, that is, "disciplinarian," or whipper-in of the boys; and the pupil went through a pretty severe course of discipline, abundance of kicks and

\* Kotzebue.

cuffs being in the order of the day. The next step of the candidate for the honours of chivalry was to become a squire, and be permitted to bear arms—a ceremony to which some equivalent exists even among many savage nations, as it did in the forests of ancient Germany. He might now accompany his knight to tournaments and to feuds, have the care of the armour and horses, and the charge of prisoners; but in battle he was to remain behind his lord, and only act on the defensive; to parry strokes aimed at him, to reach him fresh arms, assist him to remount his horse, &c. Besides carrying his banner, and shouting the battle-cry, the squire also performed the office of what in less heroic combats is called "*a bottle-holder*," in which it appears he had by no means a sinecure. He had, moreover, on many occasions, to lead the war-horse, and to carry the helmet and lance before him on the saddle, and to perform many other services, in the stable, the cellar, and even in the kitchen, which, in royal households, were regarded as distinctions, and became hereditary in certain families.

At length, after seven years more, came the period for which the young squire, while polishing his knight's armour, had often sighed. The twenty-first year was usually that in which he received knighthood, although particular circumstances often caused it to be delayed. Sometimes poverty prevented his taking on him a dignity attended with considerable expense; sometimes religious enthusiasm induced him to put off receiving his spurs till he had won them in the Holy Land; sometimes, it is to be feared, he lingered for the sake of the flirtations with the ladies of the castle, for which a squire had so many opportunities.

The attainment of the highest military and political honour required, of course, in those days, the co-operation of the clergy.

The candidate presented his sword to be consecrated on the altar; the bath and the sponsors made the ceremony resemble that of baptism, and these, as well as the white dress, were emblematic of the purity expected of the new knight, who had also to fast, to pray, and to watch his armour in a church, or over the tomb of a saint. The

ceremony of knighthood, in its original form, was indeed almost like the ordination of a priest—it was the reception into a select and holy order.\* His oath included every duty of morality then known or recognised; to be faithful and just, humane and generous, to protect religion and her ministers, widows and orphans, women “and all that were desolate and oppressed,” and moreover to chastise the infidels. The new knight was also exhorted to hear mass daily, and to be always ready to peril his life in the defence of any innocent person.

On some occasions we hear that at the banquet which followed the ceremony, he was placed in a seat of honour; but was not to eat or drink—not to look to the right nor to the left, but to bear himself as modestly as a bride; though he was afterwards allowed the gratification of exhibiting himself in all his glory to the people in the street.

Gold ornaments belonged to the knight (the squire might only wear silver), as well as gems, and especially golden spurs, costly furs, ermine, velvet, silk, and scarlet. In general, the same due gradation was kept up between knight and squire in these matters, as between Tilburina and her attendant, “mad in white linen.” If the knight wore velvet, the squire might sport damask; but if the master could only get silk, the man had to content himself with woollen cloth.

Among the undoubted advantages which resulted to society from the institution of chivalry, may be reckoned perhaps that of balancing, by the splendour and privileges attached to knighthood, the influences of hereditary rank and wealth, and establishing a kind of moral censorship over those who were subject to little other control. From the tournament, according to the laws of chivalry,

\* “Ad honorem omnipotentis Dei, te militem ordino ac in nostro ordine te gratans excipio. Memento quod Salvator mundi coram Anna Pontifice, pro te colaphizatus et illusus, coram Pilato spinis coronatus et flagellis cæsus; chlamyde vestitus et derisus, et coram populo nudus et vulneratus in cruce suspensus est, cujus opprobrium te meminisse suadeo, cujus crucem te acceptare te consulo, cujus mortem ulcisci te moneo.” These words are said, in the Utrecht Chronicle of Johann v. Beka, to have been used at the knighting of William, count of Holland, in 1247.



were excluded not only all persons of illegitimate birth ; but all heretics, blasphemers, and traitors, all who had ever been guilty of cowardice, or dishonesty, or calumny, who had broken their word, injured a woman, ill-treated an inferior, or imposed new and unjust taxes ; though it is true that, among offences demanding the same mark of reprobation, were sometimes included that of carrying on any kind of trade, or living without necessity within the walls of a city.

This rule, however, was afterwards subjected to many modifications. An old German ballad mentions, among things disgraceful to a knight, the having his clothes mended, or his boots patched ; and the love of magnificent attire was not regarded as a weakness, but rather, as we say, “ a feather in his cap ; ” and, with such stringent laws against making the most of their small means, one cannot but think with pity of the shifts to which the poor knight of Germany and their dames must often have been put in their attempts to vie in finery with the wealthy citizens of Nürnberg or the Hanse towns ; one may indeed half excuse their propensity to highway robbery, in consideration of their being forbidden to resort to almost every honest mode of replenishing their exhausted coffers.

As great as were the honours and distinctions attached to knighthood, was the disgrace inflicted on any one who, for a real or imaginary crime, was to be deprived of it. The criminal was placed upon a scaffold, his armour torn off piece by piece, broken, and cast at his feet, his spurs hacked off and thrown upon a dunghill ; even the tail of his war horse cut off, and his shield trailed through the dirt ; a basin of hot water was then poured over his head, to wash away his sacred character ; and he was dragged into church by a rope, and covered with a pall, while the priests poured forth the most solemn maledictions. But by whatever terrors on the one hand, or honours and privileges on the other, the institutions of chivalry were defended, there were too many influences at work to counteract them for us to doubt that the knights fell in reality grievously short of the ideal purity they required ; but it would be too much nevertheless to infer that these

institutions were wholly inefficient, and their shortcomings may not perhaps have been much greater than the departures of Christians in general, from the code by which they profess to be guided. "In human affairs," says a wise man of our own day, "we must often be content with approximations."

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## CHAPTER II.

### FIST LAW.

IN the continual division and subdivision of estates among the different branches of noble families, their incomes often became, of course, very disproportioned to their expenses. Many who bore high-sounding names had little more to support them than a vineyard, or a castle on a rock; and of course were often driven to great straits. Sometimes they resorted to the courts, and adopted as titles of honour the names of various offices of menial service, which emperors and kings bestowed on the great vassals of the empire; these again upon others of lower rank, and so on, down through many grades of subserviency. The duke kept his court, and had a count for his hereditary cupbearer; the count again, in his little court, had the office filled by one of knightly birth; and thus beneath their showy exterior and pompous titles, the genuine valet spirit was often maintained; for many of the nobles who ruled their serfs as despotic sovereigns, were still but gentlemen's gentlemen in the third and fourth degrees. Some of the knights, however, were of higher spirit, and proudly maintained the independence of their allodial possessions, scorning even to accept of a fief; but these generally lived in a state of complete isolation from all around them, were the enemies alike of princes and prelates, of convents and cities; and when their funds ran low, did not hesitate to make up deficiencies by sallying forth, on any pretence, to rob the defenceless peasants of a neighbouring territory of their

corn and cattle,—to plunder the rich caravans of merchants travelling from town to town, or even to lay sacrilegious hands on the possessions of the church. The most honourable mode, perhaps, which they ever adopted, of maintaining themselves, was that of selling their own and their vassals' services in any war that happened to be going on. Some who could not exactly be classed among the robber knights, as they do not seem to have "conveyed" the goods of any with whom they had not previously declared a feud in due form, were, it must be confessed, singularly unlucky, or rather, it may be, singularly lucky, in getting into quarrels with rich cities who had stores of valuable merchandise travelling on many roads; like a certain Baron of Praunstein, who in 1489 declared war against Frankfort-on-the-Maine, because a young lady of that city had refused to dance with his cousin. The well-fed and well-armed burghers were, indeed, seldom much inclined to stand and deliver, but battled stoutly in defence of their goods; but they were rarely a match for the mail-clad warrior, who was never out of practice, and a brave knight did not often return from such a skirmish empty handed. Of such as these, in the period of transition from the good old times of fist law to that in which quarrels were to be settled by a more tedious and complicated process, we find shining conspicuous the names of two valiant knights, who both then and since were renowned for the possession in an eminent degree of many chivalrous qualities, but who have often marvellously the appearance of dashing highwaymen.

Franz von Sickingen (his name had the tender diminutive of Franzchen, or little Franz, from his intimates, but has been by more complimentary historians amplified into Franciscus) was born in 1481, in his hereditary castle of Ebernburg, in Franconia, and served his apprenticeship to his trade in the Venetian war. The next we hear of him is, that he had engaged to fight for the archbishop of Mainz, and bring with him four horsemen and a boy, for a consideration of 150 gulden (12*l.* 10*s.*) a month and their clothes. His biographers point with pride to this humble beginning, contrasting it with the opulence and

grandeur to which he afterwards attained, as citizens who have waxed wealthy will sometimes exhibit with satisfaction the humble tools with which they have laid the foundation of their fortune. There are, indeed, cases, it may be suspected, even in our day, in which the ways and means of accumulation, though more difficult to follow, would be found to square little better with the eighth commandment than those of worthy Franz, who, moreover, enjoyed all the while the inestimable advantage of a good conscience. The first considerable business transaction in which the knight engaged on his own account, was a feud with the imperial free city of Worms, which began in the usual style, with lying in wait in the environs, and pouncing upon goods and passengers; but as the chivalry of the neighbourhood scented rich prey, they came flocking in from all quarters to help him, and he soon had at his disposal a force of no less than six thousand men.

As the imperial chamber happened to be sitting at Worms, however, his declaration of feud was regarded as an insult to majesty; and when he refused to desist, and answered saucily, that the chamber, if it did not like it, might move off, the ban was issued against him; and Francisus von Sickingen and his heirs, and their heirs for ever, declared to have forfeited all estates, honours, and dignities to which they might have any claim, to be condemned to "perpetual poverty and hardship, so that their lives should be miserable, and death to them delightful." All these hard words seem, nevertheless, to have bounded off from the knight with little damage; and a short time after, he is said, by a notable device, to have got possession of the persons of the honourable magistracy of Worms.

The plan was for one of his men to slink into the town at night, and there take an opportunity to commit a theft to which the punishment of the gallows was attached. Whether the man who undertook this pleasant little piece of service was a volunteer or not, does not appear; but the knight gave him the most solemn assurance, that he would not fail to come to the rescue, even if he should have mounted the ladder. The man set forth

accordingly, accomplished his getting into the town, stole in the way of duty two horses, and, as was foreseen, was condemned to be hanged. The gallows was situated outside the town, and on these occasions it was customary for the procession to be escorted to the spot by the burgo-master and the chief magistrates. The exciting little drama had proceeded to the last scene; but when the finisher of the law was about to execute on the criminal the sacred mandates of justice, Franz von Sickingen, with a troop of knights and men-at-arms, broke from the cover of a neighbouring wood, shot the executioner, who of course counted for nothing, and made captive the civic dignitaries and their attendants, and carried them off in triumph. Franz treated his prisoners well, gave them abundance to eat and drink, and even invited the burgo-master and senators to dine at his own table, though he lodged them safely in his tower, and stowed away the "commoner sort" in his turnip-cellar; but he made them pay rich ransoms, so that the feud on the whole turned out very profitable. About the same time his father-in-law had "very good luck," that is to say, made much booty in a feud with the Cologne people, so that the family appeared to be in a thriving way; but when, some time after, the knight also laid his hands, Robin-Hood fashion, upon some goods belonging to the merchants of Frankfort, strange to say, there was such a piece of work in consequence, that the Emperor Max got out of all patience, and exclaimed that, "if one of these traders only lost a bag of pepper, he disturbed the whole empire about it; but that if his imperial crown were in jeopardy, not a man would stir." Next year we again find Franz engaged in a feud with the Duke of Lorraine, at the head of 6000 foot and 800 horse, which soon increased to 1200 horse and 10,000 foot, and the Duke of Lorraine was beaten. Next he made an appearance before Metz, which had insulted one of his friends—and the Metz people were glad to buy him off with 30,000 florins.

Now came a greater outcry than ever; for there was by this time a vulgar spirit abroad in the world that had no longer the same sympathy with the privileges of gentlemen as formerly; but when his enemies became

troublesome, Franz had recourse to his sovereign Max, who was quite of his own way of thinking in such matters, and came back with the title of captain in the imperial army, and *Kammerer*, with a salary, as a token of imperial favour. The "bâtt" was taken off, and Emperor Max paid the Worms folks a compensation of 40.000 gulden—or at least he promised to do so—which, of course, must be much the same thing. Franz returned home in triumph, and he and his merry men ate up the fine Parmesan cheeses which formed a part of the spoil of the city people. In 1518 we find him again in a feud, besieging Darmstadt, and again victorious; and King Francis the First of France, quite captivated with his exploits, invited him to pay him a visit at Amboise, whither he came with twelve knights, and received a costly gold chain as a token of regard from the monarch, who hung it about his neck with his own royal hands in presence of the whole court, thus publicly proclaiming him as "a man whom the king delighted to honour." He also bestowed a still more solid proof of regard in the shape of a present of 3000 gulden, and a written promise of a pension of 5000 francs; whilst the principal persons of Sickingen's suite also received similar distinctions.

After this, the services of Franz were engaged by the Swabian league; and then again he did a little stroke of business on his own account, and administered gentle chastisement to some Carthusian monks who had affronted the picture of his friend Von Hutten, and finally he made them buy him off with 2000 gulden.

There are few characters on which different judgments may not be formed, according to the point of view from which they are regarded; but it does seem rather comical, after hearing of all these exploits, to find that Franz, all this while, was not only regarded by himself, but by others, as a redresser of wrongs, a guardian of innocence, a protector of the defenceless, and, in short, what in the western states of America is called "a regulator" of the morals of society in general, but that he was considered as *par excellence* a champion of the Reformation. In his castle many persecuted reformers, among them Reuchlin and Ulrich von Hutten, found not only a refuge, but even a

printing-press, and thence is supposed to have emanated that remarkable paper found fastened to the door of the Senate house at the famous Diet of Worms, declaring that 400 knights with 8000 men were ready to support Luther, and avenge any treachery that might be offered to him.

To this part of the history of the gallant Franz, however, we must return, in speaking of the Peasant War.

Goetz von Berlichingen, the contemporary and friend of Franz, though they are generally associated together, had little or nothing in common with him, but the most rooted attachment to fist law. He had neither the talents nor the influence of Franz; and though in his naïve autobiography he has left it on record, on the testimony of his mother and the maids, that, in his infancy, he was a "wonderful boy," he had no vocation to learning, and after remaining only a year at school, left it and joined the household of a noble knight, his cousin, as a page, and commenced a kind of study more to his mind.

One of the first incidents he alludes to is that of getting into a quarrel with a Pole against whom he had accidentally brushed at dinner-time, spoiling thereby the appearance of his hair, upon which he particularly prided himself. The Pole drew his knife, and attempted to stab him, whereupon Goetz gave him a thorough beating, but submitted to the punishment awarded him in consequence with a good grace, evincing thus a regard for law and order that he would not have shown in after life. His first campaign was with the Emperor Maximilian the First, or *Max*, as he is more affectionately called by the Germans, who, according to Goetz, was greatly struck with his appearance, as he stood there "with a great plume of black and white feathers, and a great long spear, and a great banner also black and white." The monarch stopped to look at him, asked him whose man he was, ordered him to a post of honour, and afterwards dubbed him a knight, and Goetz returned home well pleased and in high favour. It seems that it was not till after his father's death that he undertook any feud on his own account, and then he commenced business, it must be owned, in rather a small way. He and another, namely, one Hans von Massenbach, with a force of *six* men, made war upon Wurtemberg, that

is. they robbed all the Wurtemberg people they could lay their hands on, and dragged off as many as they could catch to their knightly dens.

His uncle seems to have disapproved of this undertaking—probably because it was not carried on on a larger scale—and, at his instance, Goetz took service with the Margrave of Anspach, and gained from him infinite praise in a battle with the Nurnbergers ; but the knight observes, that he would rather have had a 1000 gulden, as his funds were very low.

In 1503, we find Goetz again with his comrade Von Massenbach ; and though he now possessed villages and castles of his own, and might have gratified sufficiently, it might be thought, his pugnacious tastes in the public wars of the time, he seems never to have enjoyed himself so much as when lying in wait in a wood for weeks together, living often upon nothing but bread and cheese—and amidst hardships and perils of all kinds—to be at last rewarded with a good skirmish and plenty of plunder. The service in a great army did not suit his notions of freedom ; and the “perpetual peace of the empire” was a perpetual subject of merriment to him.

Goetz was induced, however, to offer his services in the Bavarian war, and there, by a shot from a Nurnberg field-piece, he lost his right hand, and was at first inconsolable—he would rather have lost his life, for how was he to labour in his vocation ? At length, as he lay on his bed of pain, he remembered to have heard of a certain knight of Hohenlohe, who had gone to the wars after the loss of his right hand, and a notion occurred, which he lost no time in putting in execution. He sent for a cunning smith, who undertook to make him a hand of iron—a hand still to be seen now, when the stout sinewy arm that wielded it has long since mouldered into dust. It is said to be a real masterpiece of the art of the period : every finger joint has a separate spring, and snaps like the lock of a pistol. It is preserved at Jaxthausen by the descendants of the stout old knight, as well as another of coarser workmanship, painted a flesh colour, on which the artist probably first tried his skill : this seems to have been occasionally worn as a sort of undress hand.



One cannot well understand how the whole instrument could have been set in motion ; but it certainly answered his purpose, for Goetz went to work again with it as stoutly as ever—carried on feuds with the Bishop of Bamberg, with Hanau, with Cologne—and, at length, with his grand enemies the Nurnbergers. In 1512, we find him capturing their merchants, plundering their waggons, burning what he could not carry off, and then demanding ransom for his prisoners. But the Nurnbergers raised such an outcry, that it reached even to the unwilling ears of the emperor. The ban was launched against him, “by which,” he says, “I lost 200,000 gulden, for I should have made at least that much in Nurnberg, besides, *with God’s help*, bringing away the Burgomaster himself with his great gold chain about his neck.” He had the satisfaction, however, of falling upon six Nurnbergers in the Spessart forest, and making them all kneel down, and lay their hands upon the trunk of a tree, pretended he was going to chop them off, but contented himself with administering to each man a kick and a box on the ears—whether with the iron hand or not is not stated. A year or two afterwards, some peasants from the territory of the Elector of Maintz had allowed some of their cattle to feed in a corn field belonging to the Knight of the Iron Hand. Goetz sent to complain, but his messenger was dismissed in a somewhat haughty manner with the answer, “That he had not now to do with Nurnbergers.” Thereupon Goetz set to work—nothing loth—got together 150 horsemen, attacked a large party of merchants, and made off with a booty of 8000 gulden. Besides this notable feat, one grieves to find that he laid waste several villages with fire and sword. The poor peasants were indeed the chief sufferers in all these cases ; and perhaps we are too apt, in the somewhat comic character of these proceedings, to forget that they had a darker aspect.

The rough, straightforward honesty of the knight’s character, too, the simplicity of his narrative, and his evident unconsciousness that there is any thing blameable in his doings, form a real claim to forgiveness. It is evident that he knows not what he does, and at the bottom of his wild notions of fist law also there lay one idea, true in all time, and worthy of being always kept

in mind—that energetic, valiant self-help is more noble and honourable than reliance upon others—that individual effort, courage, and determination can do more without law than law without them.

Besides the other profit which he made in this little Maintz business, Goetz took prisoner a certain Count of Waldeck, and obliged him to ransom himself for 8000 ducats; so that he had now, as he says, “with God’s help,” got together money enough to purchase the castle of Hornberg, where he took up his abode, and sent some succours to his brother-in-law Sickingen at Worms.

After this he undertook a little affair in his own peculiar line for the Elector Palatine, but positively refused to receive written orders by which to regulate his proceedings. He sent back the paper, saying, “I can’t ride by your bill, I must open my own eyes, and see what I’ve got to do.” Is not old Goetz right again? Does it not behove every one of us also not to be governed merely by the dead letter, but to “open our own eyes, and see what we have got to do?”

Von Berlichingen afterwards became entangled in some of the quarrels of Duke Ulrich of Wurtemberg with the Swabian League, was besieged in the castle of M. . . . . by their army, and, finally, from the pressure . . . . . had to capitulate. He was then carried as a . . . . . to Heilbronn, and hard conditions were proposed . . . . ., to which he refused to agree. It was ordered, . . . . . before, that he should be thrown into the tower; but as they were about to convey him thither, Goetz, by a sudden and dexterous movement, freed his arm, and, snatching a sword from one of the by-standers, invited any one that liked to come and take him. He was now . . . . . that he should be carried, not to the tower, but to the more eligible town hall, and thereupon he surrendered; but it appeared that faith was not kept with him; for he was, after all, thrown into the tower—a piece of treachery for which the Swabian League, who insisted on it, was to blame, and not the Heilbronnians, who had not the least wish so far to provoke so awkward a neighbour as he of the Iron Hand.

By the interposition of his relative, Franz Von Sick-

ingen, and another brother in arms, he was released, and the joyful event celebrated in true knightly style at the hostelry in Heilbronn ; but Goetz had to pay the reckoning, which he calls *eine gefährliche Rechnung*—a desperate bill. The host would not hear of promises to pay ; so that the knight had to lay down, in hard cash, no less a sum than 552 florins, which certainly seems a large sum, when we are told that he had lived with his lady at this hostelry for three quarters of a year, and that the charges, including those of a lying-in, only amounted to 350 : even this was found, like the under garments of King Stephen, “all too dear.”

For nearly two years after, Goetz seems to have lived in tolerable peace ; but by the end of that time the country was lit from end to end by the flames of the Peasant War.

In spite of his determined adherence to his order, and the perpetual feuds, in which he certainly did not treat the peasants with any particular tenderness, Goetz was a favourite with the people, as men whom they take to be of an honest and straightforward character usually are ; and whenever they came to plundering convents and priests, the Iron Hand and many of his brethren were willing enough to make common cause with them.

The peasants, as we shall see, desired him to become their leader ; and many of his own friends, the nobles, for obvious reasons, entreated him to accept the post, which he accordingly did for a month, during which time he is said to have been a very severe disciplinarian, and to have been excessively desirous of preventing robbery, unless where churchmen were concerned. But honest Goetz, too, we shall meet again, and we may therefore, for the present, pass over this passage in his history.

At the close of the Peasant War, although he had left the insurgents at the earliest opportunity, and, whilst acting as their leader, had certainly served their enemies more than them, he was called to a severe account for having joined them, and with some difficulty escaped with a sentence of never more mounting a war-horse, never passing a night out of his castle of Hornberg, and, what perhaps was the unkindest cut of all, “never

attempting to avenge his own or anybody else's quarrels, under a penalty of 25,000 gold gulden." With, however, many wry faces, Goetz had no choice but to comply ; and he led, most unwillingly we may be sure, a quiet life at home, till 1541, when Charles V. released him on condition of his leading a hundred horsemen against the Turks. When he had got as far as Vienna, however, he was met by the news of the lost battle, and was under the necessity of returning. One more chance he had, and was proceeding, in 1544, to join the war against Francis I., when he was stopped by the peace of Crespy ; and in 1562 the grey hairs of the roistering old knight were after all deposited in a peaceful grave. To the period of his enforced leisure we are indebted for the naive, homely narrative of his sayings and doings, which he dictated, and which throw so curious a light on the character of the individual and the time.

### CHAPTER III.

#### FREE CITIES OF GERMANY.

AMONG the bright points that strike the eye, looking back across the long dark abyss of ages past, are those associations whose bond of union was not force or fear, like those of most political societies of the period, but free will and clear insight into the advantages and necessity of mutual help. The free cities of Germany rise like happy islands amidst the wide-wasting ocean of violence and anarchy. Not by war and spoil, but by industry, enterprise, and prudent economy, did they accumulate the wealth that enabled them to heal so many of the wounds inflicted on their country by the iron hands beneath whose grasp art, science, even agriculture, by which they subsisted, was withering and perishing. By the unions which the cities formed amongst themselves, they stemmed the torrent of violence and anarchy that was threatening to

turn their country into a desert peopled by hordes of robbers and slaves; they lent the most effectual aid to the church in her efforts for the peace and civilization of Europe; yet they held the balance most firmly against the too great preponderance of her power, and rescued the human mind from the injurious subjection which she sometimes claimed as the price of her benefits when society had outgrown the leading-strings that guarded its infancy, and felt as a galling restraint what had once been a needful protection. The cities built asylums for the widows and orphans whom the nobles and warriors had made desolate; they stretched out often a helping hand to the poor knight, who was regarding them with envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, taking him into their pay as a soldier, and enabling him to get a comparatively honest living, instead of wringing "from the hard hands of peasants their vile trash," or filling some menial office at the court of a prince, and picking up the crumbs that fell from the great man's table. Behind their walls and bastions the young tree of civil liberty, which was perishing in the open country, took root and flourished: there, even whilst striving only at first for riches and their peaceful enjoyment, did men learn to prize the blessings of social order, justice, and peace. These cities were not mere aggregations of men within a narrow space, such as may have existed among the most barbarous nations; they were organic bodies animated by a living spirit; a spirit of enlightened intelligence, courage, and self-reliance, which best supplied what was defective in the religious system of the time, and gave a more healthy and manly tone to the character both of individuals and of society. The church, it cannot be denied, sometimes taught men, in the pursuit of an imagined perfection, to trample on the impulses, and violate the duties of nature; in these little republics, on the contrary, though originally they had only the attainment of temporal good in view, they rose insensibly to higher objects, and not only cultivated the social virtues more effectually, but in their struggles to maintain their place in the world, fought, in many instances, a more successful fight against the sins of the flesh, through

the discipline of the manifold cares and demands of an active life, than the recluse of the cloister, with all his fastings and flagellations. Among the happy influences belonging to these miniature states, was the ardent attachment of the free citizens of the middle ages to the little spot which they had hedged in from the wide wilderness of slavery around, where the individual, if not of noble birth, was usually the mere helpless victim of arbitrary power. Freedom and honour, the respect of his fellows, the happiness of domestic life, the interest and excitement of active business, the joviality of social intercourse, a thousand ties entwined around him, connected him closely with the city, and even the house of his birth; for in those days it was common for men to live and die beneath the same roof under which they had been born. The merchant regarded his native town with a pride fully equal to that of birth and chivalry in the privileged classes, and little envied, we may suppose, the life of the solitary feudal lord in his castle, or the anxious and dependent position of the courtier. The citizen of a humbler class showed, by parading on all occasions the tools and emblems of his trade with the same complacency with which the soldier displays his sword, or the noble his armorial bearings, that he knew his position and was content with it, and felt none of that weak shrinking from his appointed place in society, or uneasy longing after another, which has since been the epidemic malady of the middle classes.

A certain sacredness even belonged to the instruments of every handicraft—the measure, the last, or the shears; and when any attempt was made to cast ridicule on the signs of his vocation, the draper or the shoemaker was both able and willing to exchange them for more warlike implements, and make the scorner pay dearly for his jest. At the same time he does not seem to have been by any means sore or touchy upon this point, but was quite ready to give as well as take a good-humoured joke, and fully alive to the comic view that might be presented by his occupation. At all popular festivals, the procession of each trade was attended by a sort of clown, or “Jack pudding,” whose express office it was to catch at and

caricature its absurdities. The artisan's knowledge of and practice in the use of warlike weapons gave him a feeling of independence, courage, and self-confidence, to which the peasant was mostly a stranger, and which indeed often manifested itself, as new strength is apt to do, in an unruly and quarrelsome spirit, that, but for the authority of the church, might have led even to greater excesses than it did; this turbulence, however, was no mortal malady, but merely an irregular action of organs essential to life. The decay of these communities, as far as it arose from internal causes, had a very different origin.

The rise of the free cities of Germany was slower than that of the Italian republics; they lay more widely scattered, and were not therefore equally ready to support each other in the struggles with the lords of the surrounding lands. The nobles of Germany had attained greater power and independence than those of Lombardy, and the German townspeople were not animated like the former by the recollection of ancient greatness and independence, for the municipal constitution was entirely a novelty to them. The emperors were often well enough inclined to favour the cities, that they might assist them in withstanding the power of the princes and nobles; but, unfortunately for Germany, her emperors were also lords of Lombardy, and devoted most of their attention to this richer and more beautiful part of their dominions; and, in order to preserve peace behind them, often left their German vassals to do pretty much as they pleased.

The connection with Italy was, however, in another way, of the greatest service; whole caravans of merchants were continually crossing and re-crossing the Alps, and bringing with them not only the wares, but the knowledge and spirit of the Italian republics; and by this means a faint light began at length to pierce through the thick ignorance of the feudal lords of the land on which their cities were built. They attained to at least as much political wisdom as enabled them to perceive that the increase of trade and industry would be likely to increase their revenues; and that, to enable these communities to grow, it would be well to relax a little the servile bonds in which they had been held. The

cities received, with humble expressions of gratitude, the first demonstrations of the gracious intentions of their lords to extend the narrow limits of the privileges first granted to them; but in little more than two centuries, we find them not only owning allegiance to no lord but the emperor, and scarcely even to him, choosing their own magistrates, making their own laws, and trusting to none on earth but themselves for their defence; but coining money, making war and peace, and entering into alliances at their own pleasure; the Hanseatic cities even exercising sovereign sway over two seas, giving and taking crowns, and chaining kingdoms to the chariot-wheels of their mercantile monopoly.

The nullity of mere paper constitutions, the feebleness of contracts resting only on written agreement, of societies "founded upon parchment," has been often enough proved in these latter days. In the renowned Hanseatic league, we have an example of an extensive, permanent, and powerful union, for which it does not appear that any written record ever existed. The most continued and persevering research has failed to discover any document declaratory of such a union,\* although it continued for hundreds of years to cement together upwards of seventy independent communities with a firmness that resisted all external attempts to dissolve it. Even the etymology of the word "Hansa," by which this great association was known, can no longer be traced with certainty; and it seems never since to have been applied to any other object than to designate this league of certain cities of Germany, the Netherlands, and Prussia, entered into about the thirteenth century, originally with a view merely to mutual defence against robbers and pirates, by which land and sea were infested.

As in almost all of the memorable phenomena of those ages, however, the first germ of life in the Hansa was awakened by a religious impulse. The cities of Bremen, Lubeck, and Hamburg had, during the time of the Crusades, undertaken, merely as a work of piety, a voyage to

\* Almost the first time in which public mention appears to have been made of the Hansa was by our Edward III.



distant Syria, to bring succours to the Christian warriors. In the Mediterranean, they had become acquainted with the older merchants of Venice, Genoa, and Greece, and not only profited much by their commercial knowledge and experience, but learnt the incalculable benefits of union and co-operation—a secret which, on their return, they found they had need enough of to make head against domestic enemies, not less formidable than the Saracens.

On the death of the Emperor Frederick II. in 1250, the whole empire had fallen into terrible disorder, and the nobles had profited by the weakness of the state to turn their castles into robber dens and storehouses for booty. On the banks of the Rhine, which formed the principal highway of commerce, they lay in wait to interrupt the wealth that floated down its waters, and almost every road was rendered impassable, either by open plunderers or by the heavy tolls that were levied at every few miles' distance, as they passed through each little territory; the stoppage of trade, the occurrence of daily feuds, of course followed; ploughshares were turned into swords, and reaping-hooks into spears: and "every one," says a writer of those days,\* "carried with him flint and steel," not as modern Germany does, to light its peaceful cigar, but to "set fire to the dwelling or property of his enemy." The towns on the northern sea-coast had not only these troubles to encounter, in common with those of the interior, but also to defend themselves against the attacks of the warlike kings of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden; but they did not shrink from the contest. They were mostly, by this time, provided with strong walls, huge masses of earth and stone, upon which, in the absence of artillery, even considerable armies could make little impression. Burghers of all classes were skilled in the use of warlike weapons, and ready to fight and die in defence of their property and their freedom; and their merchant-ships, which on account of the insecurity of the seas, were obliged to be always prepared for an attack, were easily turned into vessels of war. The city of Lubeck alone had, indeed, not long before ventured on a sea-fight with

\* Conrad, "Mainzer Chronik."

the Danes that lasted from morning till evening, and concluded it by bringing home a Danish ship in triumph into her harbour. This and other such bold undertakings had made her name renowned and honoured amongst all her neighbours, and more and more cities sought her alliance. In the next century, the Hanseatic league, at the head of which stood Hamburg, Lubeck, and Bremen, had extended its ramifications so far that when Wisby, one of the united towns, was attacked and taken by the Danes, no fewer than seventy-seven cities, of greater or less importance, declared war against them in consequence, and the Danes had soon a powerful fleet upon their coasts, which compelled them to make peace on conditions very advantageous to the league. In 1368 war again broke out; and this time the plans of Lubeck were bolder, aiming at no less than the entire conquest of Denmark and the division of her territory. The King of Norway, having failed to send him the help he had promised, Waldemar of Denmark fled, with what treasures he could get together, into Germany, while the fleets of the Hansa ravaged his coasts, and those of Norway, with fire and sword. In order to obtain peace, he had to deliver up all the castles of his province of Schonen, and one-third of its revenues, for the space of seventeen years, and to enter into an agreement that in future no king of Denmark should reign without the consent of the associated cities.

The high political consideration to which the Hanseatic league had arisen induced the Emperor Charles IV. to declare his wish to become its head, although he had previously pronounced his disapproval of all such unions; the men of Lubeck were, however, wise enough to reject all such advances, though, while refusing the Emperor's request, they endeavoured to make amends for their refusal by the most superlative politeness; and they even went so far as to wall up a gate of their city through which the emperor had walked, "that no unholy foot might ever tread again upon the spot thus consecrated."

In the early days of the league, there were few of the cities that were not more or less subject to the dominion of some feudal sovereign as well as to the Emperor, but

they mostly soon after managed either by a bargain or by force of arms to shake off his yoke, and the liege lord was either forbidden to enter the city, or only admitted on strict conditions of good behaviour, on occasion of a tournament or other high solemnity, and even then the number of followers he was to bring with him, and every particular of his deportment, was carefully laid down for him beforehand.

All sovereign rights of the chase, of fisheries, mines, and tolls, came by degrees into possession of the Hanse towns, and with their power and prosperity increased their population and means of defence. Dortmund, which now has scarcely 800 houses, then counted 10,000; Lubeck, which has now fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants, saw her streets thronged with 200,000 men capable of bearing arms.\* A high and fearless spirit, unknown to later times, animated every member of the union; and a single city would often enter, as Lubeck had done, into contests with enemies apparently of far superior strength, even without taking the precaution to secure the co-operation of her allies.

Had the Hanse towns been politically ambitious, there is little doubt that they might have rendered themselves independent masters of great part of northern Germany, but they seem never to have forgotten that they were merchants; and though their civic pride was doubtless flattered, when the kings of the north and the princes of Germany trembled before them, they seem to have confined their ambition to gaining commercial advantages.

The highest legislative power of the Hansa was composed of deputies from all the towns; the making of new ordinances, the decision of disputes between the Hanse towns and foreign powers, or between the towns themselves; the settlement of the contributions in money, ships, or men to be furnished by each; of declarations of war and treaties of peace, belonged to their diet. Lubeck, as the chief or foremost member of the union, obtained the privilege of having the diet assembled once in three

\* Kortum's "Entstehungs Geschichte der freystädtischen Bunde im Mittelalter."

years regularly within her walls. Those who neglected to attend were fined, or even threatened with exclusion ; and a manifesto was previously issued, declaring the subjects to be discussed in each, that the representatives might come fully prepared ; and the other towns held for this purpose what were called "pre-deliberations," in order to make up their minds what instructions were to be given to their deputies, concerning every question.

Although every city that had joined the league had the right to send deputies to the assembly, on account of the expense occasioned by the insecurity of the roads, it was very common for several of the smaller ones to commit their business altogether to the charge of the same person ; and there were also towns which had been admitted to share in some of the commercial advantages of the league, for payment of a certain contribution in men and money, but which had no share in the deliberations of their diet. On account of the complicated nature of the affairs falling under its cognizance, the deputies were mostly chosen from the learned classes, but sometimes there was so much difficulty in finding suitable representatives, that the number was not nearly full. The precise number necessary for the transaction of business does not seem to have been determined ; it was left rather too much to a vague feeling of what was reasonable and suitable.

The whole union of the Hansa, which at one time included altogether as many as eighty-five cities, was divided into four provinces, each having its capital : for the Prussian and Livonian towns, Dantzic ; for those of Cleves, the Mark, and Westphalia, Cologne ; for Saxony and Brandenburg, Brunswick ; and for the Wendish or Vandalic cities, Lubeck, where the diet of the whole League was held. The great hall in her senate house was on these occasions fitted up in a manner suited to its dignified purpose ; and the burgomaster and senate received the deputies in a solemn and respectful manner, and entertained them with the *Ehren-wein*, or wine of honour, before commencing business. In the assembly Lubeck had the chief place ; on her right sat Cologne, on her left Hamburg, and the others had also their appointed places, although there were, notwithstanding, occasional struggles for pre-

cedence. The Burgomaster of Lubeck opened the proceedings by thanking all present for their attendance, and received usually a courteous answer. After the debate the decisions were made according to a majority of voices ; and the great seal of Lubeck put on them the last legal sanction.

The executive power for the affairs of the league was also in the hands of Lubeck, who took charge of all the records and archives of the Hansa as well as of the exchequer—carried on their correspondence, heard all complaints and remonstrances, and transacted the whole business of the League in the intervals of the meetings of the diet. From the year 1418, also, this city was allowed in cases of danger to exercise during these intervals full authority over the others, and her decrees had the force of law.

The heaviest punishment to which any member of the Hansa could be subjected was the great ban, which involved not only exclusion from all rights and privileges of the union, but even a prohibition of all intercourse with other cities belonging to it : no other in such a case dared to hold any communication with the offending party ; and a re-admittance into the League was attended with many difficulties : pecuniary compensation, penances, pilgrimages, and humble supplications, must first testify to the sincerity of repentance of the excommunicated city.

The lesser ban deprived the offender of her rights at the diet, but not of the intercourse with other cities. Minor offences were all punished by fines.

The Hanse diet exercised plenary authority in the last instance ; and the heaviest punishments were denounced against any member who should appeal from it to any prince or lord, or even to the emperor himself.

The cities of the south never attained the power, freedom, and independence of the Hansa, nor was the course of their development by any means so rapid as that of the maritime cities to whom the sea offered a constant field for the exercise of strength and energy, of boldness and self-reliance. Whoever has successfully contended with the elements in their fury, is not very likely to submit with patience to oppression and tyranny on shore. Among the cities forming the Rhine league, we meet with little

of the high stern daring of the Hansa; yet they, too, grew up amidst constant warfare, and had to exert themselves vigorously to clear the roads of the noble highwaymen who so seriously obstructed their commerce; and that they did so with good effect is evident, since many of their annals show long lists of the names of the noblest families of Franconia and Swabia, whose members had perished by the hands of their executioners for this offence.

Nurnberg, the queen of the southern cities, does not seem to have been ever mentioned earlier than about the period of the Norman conquest of England, though within the same century it had already a lively market; for the number of pilgrims brought thither by the reputation of the holy St. Sebaldus had made it already the resort of traders in all such articles as they might be supposed to require. On the spot sanctified by the burial of the saint, the city had its birth, booths and barns being erected for the convenience of the traffic; but it is not till a hundred years after that it is spoken of as a city; and at this period it was still subject to the jurisdiction of a castellarius, or burgrave of the emperor. Even then it was a thriving place, but it was not till 1219 that it obtained from Frederick II. the charter that enabled it to burst its feudal bonds, and start on its rapid course of prosperity and freedom. From this period date the erection of many of its fine public buildings, although the city was still surrounded by vast forests; and the honey of the wild bees harbouring in them is mentioned as one of its most important articles of trade. Thirty years afterwards, the anarchical state of the German empire, by obliging the Nurnbergers to take the government and defence of their city into their own hands, formed another still more important era in its history. They joined the Rhine league; entered into close commercial alliances with other towns; and made from time to time new regulations concerning the supply of provisions, buildings, public diversions, and police matters, which afford proof of the growth of a numerous, active, and spirited population. That a residence in Nurnberg afforded many advantages may be inferred from the fact, that banishment to a distance of four, eight, and up to twenty miles from its

walls, was deemed a sufficient punishment for many offences; and a curious illustration of the primitive style in which the public affairs were carried on at this time is given in an entry in the chronicles for 1285, wherein it is stated that in this year, "when Berthold Pfenzing was burgomaster," it was determined, for the first time, that the names of the banished persons should be entered into a book—for that "no man could keep them in his head any longer."

From this time, notwithstanding continual feuds in which the city was engaged, and the worryings of robber knights who infested all the roads, we find every indication of increasing comfort and prosperity.

The enthusiastic description of *Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini*, afterwards Pope Pius II., who visited the German cities in the latter end of the fifteenth century, is well known. He declares that the kings of Scotland would be delighted to be able to live as well as a middling Nurnberg citizen; and that the city has scarcely an equal for beauty and splendour, for the various delights which it affords, for the majesty of its public buildings, and for the comfort and cleanliness of the private ones.\*

Not only the arts which contribute to the adornment of life, architecture, painting, and sculpture rose during this period in Nurnberg to a degree of splendour that, as we have seen, excited the admiration of an observer familiar with all the magnificence of Italy, but the internal regulations for the security, health, and well-being of the

\* It is worth while perhaps to give the description in his own words:—

"*Noricorum oppidum, flumine Pegnia intersectum, præterire non possumus. Dic, rogamus, quæ nam facies hujus urbis, qui splendor, quæ amoenitas, quæ deliciae, quis cultus, quæ forma regiminis, quid illi ad civitatem omni ex parte perfectum desiderare quispiam poterit? Quis venientibus Franconia inferiori, et procul spectantibus ejus urbis aspectus, quæ majestas, quid decus ab extra visentibus, quis intus nitor platearum, quæ domorum munditiæ? Quid sancti Sèbaldi templo magnificentius, quid splendidius divi Laurentii delubro? Quid arce regia vel superbius vel munitius, quid fossa, quid mœnibus illustrius? Quot ibi civium ædes invenies regibus dignas? Cuperent tam egregiè Scotorum reges, quam medicos Nurnbergæ cives habitare.*"

inhabitants, which afford so much more satisfactory evidence of the worth of a government, were the constant objects of watchful attention in Nurnberg, and present a very striking contrast to the condition of the towns under noble and monarchical rule. It was a truly paternal government which, though occasionally "tempered" with the birch, took thought in all things for its children, and provided even for their pleasures—as kind parents do—though such a care might seem almost superfluous with children so healthy and lively. A large piece of ground outside the gates was purchased, and planted with lime trees, to be devoted to the amusements of the populace; and merry doings enough went on there—archery meetings, festal processions of the various trades in their picturesque costumes, martial sports resembling tournaments, and many games and exercises which contributed to the health and exhilaration of all classes; whilst for the higher there were balls and banquets at the senate house, and weddings, christenings, birthdays, and family festivals without number. But with all this joviality there was no danger that the citizens should degenerate into mere pleasure-lovers, for there was at all times serious business enough, public and private, to be attended to.

Nurnberg has long ceased to be the centre of German and Italian commerce, and a blooming and prosperous free city: its glories are past, but it has still with its fine architectural remains, its four gigantic towers, its castle, its quaint old houses with fresco paintings, and subterranean passages, the dim religious light of its Gothic churches, their painted windows, and patrician coats of arms, a picturesque middle-age air that is striking to the imagination, while the general appearance of cleanliness and comfort give it the air of a cheerful and lively old age. The environs of Nurnberg are naturally sandy and barren, but have been rendered fruitful by the active industry of the inhabitants. It had in the days of its glory a larger territory than any of the free cities, and held dominion over six towns. The revenue, at one time, has been estimated at as much as six millions of florins, though it seems likely that this was somewhat exaggerated; but so great was its expenditure that it accumulated a debt of



no less than twelve millions.\* The decline of its prosperity is in some measure to be attributed to the new direction taken by commerce, and other unavoidable chances, but far more to the incubus of its patrician families; and the absurd expense of christenings, weddings, funerals, and all ceremonies public and private, has been mentioned as among the causes of the impoverishment of the citizens; there is some appearance also that temperance was not among the number of their virtues, for we find that in the year 1540 the magistrates had ordered a particular kind of barrow to be made for the purpose of carrying home the drunken people found in the gutters.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### THE HANSA AT HOME AND ABROAD.

IN form and extent, many of the cities of northern Germany, once members of the powerful Hansa, are but little changed from what they were during the period of their prosperity, whilst their population has declined to a third or a fourth of what it was.† Like all towns of that date they have, of course, much of the character of fortresses; but after providing for this first necessity of defence, the citizens seem to have employed most of their zeal and their resources in the building and decoration of their religious edifices. Their churches are generally of great extent, and have lofty towers covered with copper; they were carried up to a giddy height, so as to be visible

\* This circumstance does not seem to imply a very parsimonious character in the worthy magistracy of Nurnberg; so that the story is probably a calumny, which says that they once, from a motive of economy, instead of hanging a thief, presented him with five florins, to get himself hanged elsewhere, where it could be done cheaper.

† Hamburg and Bremen, two of the four cities that have remained free, are exceptions to this rule; but Lubeck being nearly encircled by the territory of Denmark, has suffered grievously from her jealousy of the Danish king.

thirty or forty miles off, and to serve as land-marks by which the burghers of these maritime communities might distinguish and greet their city while yet far off upon the waters.\* The general character of these edifices is that of strength, solemnity, and durability, and they have little of the light, graceful, fantastic architecture of the cathedrals and churches of the south. The material is mostly brick, for in this hill-less land little else was to be had; but great skill has often been shown in producing variety of effect by the introduction of elegantly-shaped, glazed, and coloured tiles, as well as of a blue stone resembling marble, brought from Sweden. The interior is seldom enlivened by painting or stained glass: altars and pulpits present few carvings or decorations, besides gigantic brass candelabras, and baptismal fonts of prodigious circumference most whimsically decorated; for their chief ornaments were the trophies of naval victories, and the banners and arms of humbled foes.

The Hanse cities often emulated each other in the rich and stately style of building in their senate houses, which were of imposing proportions, and shone in all the glory of gay colours, copper, and gold. The seats and tribunes for the members of the council were also highly ornamented, and frequently the walls inscribed with pithy sentences, intended to keep those who assembled there in mind of their duty. In the streets, necessity, individual caprice, or temporary convenience only had been consulted, and had produced labyrinthian entanglement of narrow crooked lanes and alleys, in which no kind of plan is to be discovered, and which appear quite unworthy of the fine old houses, with their rich and manifold ornaments. In many of the sea-port towns these were built of stone, with lofty gables with the ends turned towards the street, and they had usually immense halls, spacious enough to turn a coach and four in. The private rooms were in most cases small, dark, and gloomy, with little round thick windows, and very scanty furniture. But the whole family, wife and children, men and maids, lived mostly in patriarchal fashion in the great hall: here the

\* Several of these were destroyed in Hamburg by the great conflagration of 1842.

mechanic plied his trade, and the merchant piled up vast stores of goods ; and the lofty gables, with several tiers of windows, were also used as warehouses for the more bulky commodities, such as iron, corn, and wool, in which much of the trade of the Hanse towns consisted. Outside the house was frequently seen a tablet, with the date of its erection and the name of the builder. In the houses even of the wealthy merchants and patricians there do not appear to have been any apartments for the reception of company, for most of the pleasure as well as the business of life was carried on out of doors. For idle moments there were the "Arthur's Courts," as they were called, used mostly by the younger citizens for martial exercises, the town cellars with their stores of wine, and the pleasant shady groves of the city territory beyond the walls ; but the church, the guildhall, the market-place, the ships, and the coasts of foreign land, afforded abundant means of activity and excitement, that must have made what is commonly called pleasure appear insipid in the comparison.

The streets, where in the fine weather all kinds of occupations were carried on, presented a scene of bustling and noisy activity : smiths hammered, carpenters sawed, shoemakers and tailors stitched, sitting cross-legged in the open air on little platforms before their doors, for the sake of talking with each other, and being always at hand to see all that was going on. They did not wait for the newspapers to tell them what their neighbours in the next street were doing, but saw it all living, acting before their eyes.

The order and cleanliness of modern great towns might be in many instances wanting ; but to the eye, at least, their absence was compensated by the gay variety and incessant movement of their multiform picturesque life, which the peculiar style of architecture in the houses, the great projections of doorways and windows, and elaborate ornaments, framed in, at every turn and angle, into a fresh *tableau-vivant*, with the richest effects of light, shade, and colour.

The costume of the wealthiest citizens during the most prosperous days of the Hanse was mostly of a grave and

sombre cast : ample cloaks trimmed with fur enveloped the persons of the elder burghers, and doublets and hose of leather were worn by all. Distinctions were made, however, by the superior costliness of the furs worn by senators and other great men, who were, indeed, not permitted to be shabbily dressed, even if they were so minded—the wearing of sheep-skin, for instance, being expressly forbidden to them. A certain kind of fox-skin seems to have been regarded as the peculiar distinction of the higher orders, since it was once mentioned as a terrible inversion of the true order of things, that some citizens of the lower class had been respectfully saluted by “a man who wore fox-skin.” Every citizen carried arms ; and the insecurity of all roads obliged even the peasant coming in with his produce to market always to carry his pike over his shoulder. On warlike occasions, the great merchants appeared superbly armed and mounted, and the common citizens carried bows, arrows, crossbows, and “*morning-stars*.”

Many circumstances contributed to give an aristocratic character to the constitution of society in the Hanse towns. In communities whose chief energies were directed to foreign commerce, it was inevitable, even without any express regulations to that effect, that the chief offices should fall into the hands of the great merchants ; and the distinguished position of their chief magistrate—the military talents and the personal courage which in the almost uninterrupted feuds that the city had to maintain was required of those who filled the office—rendered it an object of ambition even to nobles, who had been gradually attracted to reside within the walls that offered so safe and pleasant a refuge from many of the storms that desolated the open country. At first the path to this dignity appears to have been open to all ; but it gradually became the practice in many cities, for the senate to fill up all important posts from among the chief merchants and patricians, without reference to the body of the citizens, and at length to extend the term for which they were held even to a life-long tenure.

The town nobles had been at first looked down on in some measure by their caste : it was decreed that they

should not be admitted to the tournament and similar honours, unless they would renounce their rights of citizenship, and an intermarriage with the families of the traders would subject them to be completely what we call "cut." But by degrees it was discovered that the fortune of a rich citizen might be a most convenient prop to the decaying dignity of a feudal castle, and the nobles therefore at length gained their own consent to contract a *mésalliance* with the fair daughters of merchants. In the knightly league of 1485 it was enacted, that a noble might, "for the support of an ancient and honourable line," be permitted to espouse the virtuous daughter of a worthy burgher, provided she should bring him at least 4000 florins. But however the case might stand with the nobles, the benefit of this liberality was very equivocal as far as the citizens were concerned: for in most of the free cities, these patrician families soon formed with the great merchants a close aristocratic body, that gradually arrogated to itself all valuable privileges, and held itself aloof from any mixture with the more numerous classes. The influence of these *Geschlechter*—"the families or races," as they were called *par excellence*—has been compared to that of the tape-worm on the human frame; but fortunately there were many healthy influences at work to counteract it. The trades or guilds, constituting the great mass of the citizens, raised up a powerful opposition, and often wrung from the unwilling hands of the *Geschlechter* a greater or less share in the government, though terrible sanguinary struggles took place between the parties that more than once brought the whole community to the brink of destruction. Sometimes the patricians were beaten, and even driven out of the city; more frequently, however, the victory remained with them, for they acted together on a well-concerted plan, whilst the people were distracted by variety of counsels and leaders: as the constitution of the Hanseatic cities also was everywhere similar, the governing body in each had an interest in repressing disturbances in a sister community, and the "sacred right of insurrection" was one which the Hansa would in no case admit.

The associations of the guilds were modelled in the first

instance after the institutions of chivalry, the grades of apprentice, journeyman, and master corresponding with those of page, squire, and knight, and the honour of mastership being conferred like that of knighthood with many impressive ceremonies. The point of honour was also strictly maintained in the guild: illegitimate birth, or a disgraceful course of life, were sufficient grounds of exclusion. A guildmaster was appointed to each, who maintained a vigilant superintendence over the conduct of every member; but, though obliged to submit to this kind of censorship, he felt the benefit as well as the restraints of society; if on a journey, he might with confidence apply to those who followed the same calling, even in another city, for shelter and accommodation, and, in case of distress, he was sure of assistance from his brethren of the trade.

None presumed to hold themselves aloof, and shrink from these brotherly bonds; and the members of each fraternity usually lived together in one street, and had their common stand upon the market-place. Every workman, before he could hope to become a master, had to give a specimen of his skill in the production of a masterpiece—"to win his spurs" we might say—and any one considered a bungler was, for the honour of the craft, sure to be rejected.\* The improvement of each handicraft was greatly promoted by the emulation that existed, not only among the different masters of each guild, but also among the guilds of the same trade in the different cities, to produce the best specimen of workmanship; and no unauthorised practitioner was ever allowed to carry on the trade even in the neighbouring villages. The rivalry that usually existed between the trades of various cities had an exception in the case of the masons, who were all closely connected together; and as their work had to be carried on, now in one place now in another, they divided all Germany into four districts, corresponding with the four

\* This custom still exists in many of the cities of Germany: the candidate for the honour of mastership is shut up with his tools, without any help, and compelled to give a "taste of his quality," and produce whatever he can. A butcher is required to kill an ox with a single stroke.

cardinal points, and placed in authority over each of these a hut, or lodge, to one or other of which every mason was obliged to belong. These had their seats at Cologne, Strasburg, Vienna, and Zurich.

The rapidly increasing numbers, turbulent spirit, and consciousness of strength in the trades, made it of course no easy matter for the patricians to maintain their ascendancy. Cologne, Strasburg, and Aix-la-Chapelle, could each muster 20,000 workmen accustomed to bear arms; Nurnberg alone, towards the close of the middle ages, 30,000; and in cities where the manufacturing element predominated over the commercial, the trades were sometimes able to obtain a permanent ascendancy. In the Hanse towns, whose energies were mostly directed to foreign commerce, the aristocrats almost always remained triumphant. These patricians, however, were no mere "do-nothing and eat-alls," fattening on the industry of their fellow-citizens. They had much important business on their hands which they had to get through as best they might, with very few rules and settled regulations to guide them. They had, as old Gotz von Birlichingen said, "to open their own eyes and see what they had to do." The Burgomasters were no *vois faibles*, but active, efficient, honoured, and often much-dreaded governors. They were not only required as statesmen to guide and direct the affairs of an active, sturdy, mostly rebellious community—frequently carrying on at the same time their own extensive business as merchants, but both they and the senators were constantly called on to act as military leaders; and as, in the rude and simple style of warfare of those days, success depended less on technical and scientific knowledge, and more on natural capacity and bodily strength than it does at present, many of the senators and burgomasters distinguished themselves greatly as captains. Besides their soldierly exploits also, not a few of them gained great glory as naval commanders; for, from the lively commerce carried on with all the coasts of the North and Baltic Seas, they were generally familiar with the sea from their boyhood; and their perpetual battles with pirates gave them early opportunities of practice in mari-

time warfare. The annals of their native cities, indeed, record things done and suffered by these stern chiefs, which, for good or evil, might take their place among the deeds of the iron men of ancient Rome. That of Joachim Appelman, for instance, Burgomaster of Stargard, a modern Brutus, who, when his degenerate son was condemned to die, took on himself the execution of the sentence, set out in pursuit of the criminal, accompanied by some ecclesiastics and the executioner, surprised him in his place of concealment, and, after seeing him confess, and bestowing his *paternal blessing*, accompanied him to the churchyard, and saw his head struck off.

We are reminded of the great men of antiquity also in the many-sidedness which enabled them to turn from one pursuit to another with a readiness of resource seldom found in these division-of-labour times; and the very imperfection of the political and social institutions of the time served undoubtedly to develop this mother-wit to a surprising extent. It is perhaps not the least important of the problems of modern education to restore this totality—unavoidably lost in the application to separate objects, which was yet indispensable for the progress of society collectively. The harsh, fierce character stamped upon so many actions of the citizens of the Hanse towns did not belong so much to them as to their time. In the picture of the life of those days we find everywhere the colours laid on with a stronger, bolder hand: their pleasures were more jovial, their passions burnt more fiercely, their pains were more terrible than in a more advanced age; but the difference may perhaps be more nearly balanced than at first appears, by the increased susceptibility which belongs to greater refinement. In the lower strata of our society, to which our superficial refinement has scarcely penetrated, the same characteristics are still observable.

A frightful record of the sanguinary character of the criminal jurisdiction of the time is contained in the autobiography of "Master Francis," executioner of Nurnberg, who, besides the particulars of his life, gives a list of his "works;" from which it appears that, in the course of his professional career, this worthy had put to death 361



persons. The miscreant adds also an account of the various styles of his performances, beheading, hanging, even *boiling in oil*!\* but the record is too sickening to dwell on. "*Guarda e passa.*" Those who are curious in such matters may find enough of them in the annals of the good old times. With the horrors of superstition, also, in the punishment of witches and the like, most readers are familiar enough; and such as occur in the registers of these cities have little to distinguish them from similar occurrences elsewhere. Sometimes, indeed, there is an entry somewhat more noteworthy; as, for instance, of the arrival of "the Wandering Jew" at the Isar Gate of the city of Munich. It appears that this rather remarkable visitor was not allowed to enter the city, but he told those who went to see him that he had been seven times round the world, and on being shown a picture of the Saviour readily vouched for the likeness. A circumstance is added, which throws perhaps a little light on the matter. This same "Wandering Jew," it seems, dealt in pearls and jewels, which, as memorials of so distinguished a stranger, were of course eagerly bought up at a high price.

Another entry concerns a certain wolf, who had committed terrible havoc, so that the country people, even at mid-day, were afraid to cross the fields; but a still greater consternation was created when the discovery was made that the wolf was no other than a certain deceased Burgo-master of unhappy memory, who, as everybody knew, had stood looking out of an upper window of his house to watch his own funeral. The night watchman was ready to swear to his identity; and as, putting all things together, no doubt existed any longer in the mind of any reasonable person, the formidable wolf, when taken, instead of being disposed of in the usual manner, was hung on a high gallows in a brown wig, and a long grey beard, by way of completing his likeness to the burgo-master aforesaid.

The constant and active communication kept by the cities of the Hansa, not only among themselves and with all parts of Germany, but with the most distant countries,

\* Von Hormayr's "*Historisches Taschenbuch.*"

kept alive the intelligence of the people ; but it cannot be denied that their energies were rather too exclusively directed to money-getting. Had these communities arisen in a period of literary culture, or amongst the glorious relics of the art, of a brighter age, they would have presented many more points of resemblance to the republics of Greece and Italy, and in many of their institutions they even improved on the example set them by the latter, but their commercial policy was, unfortunately for themselves, always narrow and selfish ; their grand aim was monopoly, and they were mostly anxious to exclude, not only foreigners, but even the peasants of their own territory from sharing in their advantages. Harsh, arbitrary regulations existed with respect to the goods brought in by the country people : the prices were fixed ; and if even at these prices they did find purchasers, they were often not allowed to carry them out again. In matters of trade, it is notorious that the path which separates honourable gain and competition from covetousness and selfish grasping is at all times narrow and somewhat slippery, and much time and experience is necessary to teach either nations or individuals what a more enlightened view regards as their true interest. It is indeed one of those lessons at which we are all dull enough, though nature takes a deal of pains, and employs a vast variety of masters, to teach them to us.

As no Hanseatic merchant was allowed to carry on business privately with a foreign country, all transactions had to pass through the great mercantile Courts or Factories—singular institutions, in which much of the character of the age as well as many of the peculiar features of the Hanseatic league are to be traced. One was established in London ; one at Bruges, for the trade of France, Spain, and Flanders ; one at Novgorod, in Russia, which maintained the ancient connexion between the interior of Asia and the north of Europe ; and one at Bergen, in Norway, which supplied furs, iron, and herrings to all Christendom—the last being a very important article when fast-days were generally observed. The costly wares of the East, pearls and spices, silk and gold, reached the Hanse towns also by the old way of Venice. During the

crusading times a very active trade was carried on by the Danube, though it was materially obstructed by the fierceness of the wild tribes on its borders; and it was also by no means uncommon for the Hanse merchants to have to fight their way up and down the Rhine.

The erection of the strong and immense buildings used for these Factories, and the maintaining them with their numerous officers and attendants, of course occasioned considerable expense, which was met by a small tax on goods passing through them. The constitution of society within these establishments had a semi-monastic character, as their inmates, amounting often to as many as 3000 persons, were bound to celibacy and to the most unconditional obedience. These regulations were stated to be absolutely necessary for the maintenance of discipline; but there is little doubt that they were chiefly dictated by the fear that the marriages of the inmates of the Factory, into the families of the countries where they resided, might carry away the trade from the Hansa. The Factory was divided into separate courts, or gardens, over the entrance of each of which hung its coat of arms, and its particular name. Each of these was again divided into fifteen "Houses," placed under the care of the same number of House-Fathers, from whom a council of eighteen was annually chosen, who, with the assistance of two elders or aldermen, and a writer, directed the concerns of the whole factory. From their decisions, however, an appeal was allowed to the senate of Lubeck, or even to the great diet of the Hansa. At the end of ten years, each inmate of the Factory was allowed, if he pleased, to return home.

The Factory of Bergen, of which a more exact description has been left than of any other, was divided into two-and-twenty courts, each containing fifteen or more houses built round the bay on which the city stands, and provided with every convenience for landing goods, the sea being here deep enough for the largest ships to come close up to the quay. The lower floors of the houses were occupied by vast vaults and storehouses for goods, the one above this, as sleeping rooms for the inmates, and above that again, were the kitchens and places for

fuel. At the back lay more warehouses, a great kitchen garden, and hall for the use of the whole court. In the summer each House-Father lived apart, with the "family" of companions, clerks, messengers, and apprentices under his care, for whose orderly behaviour he was responsible, and for whose daily wants he had to provide, though many of the companions were merchants trading on their own account. In the winter, the families of each court took their meals together in the great hall, which was built in the old northern fashion with no windows, except one at the top, which served at the same time, it appears, to let the smoke out, as a great fire was made beneath it in the centre of the apartment. The opening was furnished with a window, that could be closed by means of a long pole. At night each family returned to its own apartments; and no member of the society was permitted to pass a night outside the walls, which were constantly watched by armed sentinels. The whole edifice had, indeed, much of the character of a fortress; and on many occasions of popular tumults, in the countries where they resided, these merchants and their clerks made a valiant and even desperate defence. Sometimes quarrels were occasioned by jealousy entertained by the people of the country against the prosperous foreigners, but just as often by the presumption and insolence of the Hanseats themselves. The morals of these great societies of bachelors were often, indeed, not "what the world calls middling," but many degrees worse; and it is to be feared that the House-Fathers, who had to answer for the conduct of their families, must have contented themselves with seeing that they were good men, in the city sense of the word. In the riots that took place in London, and other populous towns, they were perhaps more often sinned against than sinning; but in places where they were comparatively stronger, the behaviour of the inhabitants of the Factories was frequently very outrageous. The Norwegians must indeed have paid dearly for whatever material advantages they derived from the residence of this large body of wealthy strangers in their capital.

As early as the thirteenth century, some of the kings

of Norway had summoned to Bergen a few German workmen, to whom a particular street was assigned as an abode, which received the name of the "Shoemakers' Alley," as the majority were of that trade, although there were also goldsmiths, tanners, and other workmen among them. This seemed a harmless colony enough, and even profitable, since they were also to pay a certain rent to the government, and to furnish forty armed men for military service. It happened, however, that the people of Bergen, having suffered terribly from the attacks of the formidable bands of pirates that infested the North Sea, had found themselves compelled to accept the offer of their Hanseatic neighbours, to lend them large sums of money on mortgage on their lands and houses. When the Norwegians failed in payments, the Germans accepted in exchange commercial privileges and monopolies, and at length the houses and lands also fell into their hands; and the natives found themselves not only crippled in their trade, but even driven out of their city, and compelled to build a new one on the opposite side of the bay, for the old city had become almost exclusively the property of the foreigners. A Factory was now established, merchants, clerks, messengers, masters, journeymen, and apprentices of all trades poured in; and as they were mostly bold stout fellows, well-armed, without any wives or children to encumber their movements, they soon became extremely formidable; they acknowledged no laws but such as suited them; employed none but their own workmen; refused, as foreigners, to pay taxes, except some very trifling duties on exports and imports; sold their own beer and wine without the usual duties; and by their freedom from all burdens, as well as their greater command of capital, were soon able to get nearly the whole trade of the place into their own hands. The German quarter became a sanctuary for all kinds of bold disturbers of the peace, as they refused to deliver up to the Norwegians any criminals whom they chose to protect. To obtain various trading advantages they resorted to the most outrageous methods; for instance, it happened that the large and much frequented fish-market lay between the Hanseatic factory and the "Shoemakers'

Alley," and as the Norwegians could only reach it by passing through this street, the Germans hit on the plan of barricading it, and defending the pass with clubs, stones, and fish, till they had had their choice of the market. Sometimes they would buy up all the provisions brought into the town, and sell them again at their own price to the people; and on one occasion they set fire to a church and convent, where some king's officers who had displeased them had taken refuge; and though many persons, and even two ecclesiastics of rank, lost their lives in the flames, the Norwegian government could obtain no other redress from the formidable Hansa than the rebuilding of the church and convent. Nay, what was worse, they were compelled to admit, that they could not afford to expel the strangers who had committed so many outrages. One of their acts of violence was it seems committed, as in the case of the lady who stole the volume of sermons, purely from a religious motive. They attacked and took by storm two parish churches, established in them their own priests, and *vi et armis* had mass performed in them for their own behoof—a pious act from which it is to be hoped they did not fail to reap the benefit. They probably thought, like Juliet, that they "had need of many orisons."

A curious course of initiatory exercises, varying oddly between jest and earnest, which every novice in the Factory had to go through, remind one rather of a course of Spartan educational discipline, or the kind of horse-play formerly practised on board our men-of-war, than an introduction to a peaceful mercantile life. Sometimes the unhappy candidate was seized, tied to a rope, and hauled up to the opening over the fire, while barrels of such materials as were thought best adapted to emit a disgusting smell in burning, and which had been carefully prepared for the purpose, were kindled, and the victim was kept in the smoke to answer a long string of questions, until he was nearly suffocated; sometimes he was ducked repeatedly in the sea, and flogged every time he came up. Even the festival of the May could not terminate without a flogging: the youngsters were put

into a boat, and ordered to row to the nearest wood to fetch home branches of May. During their absence, a corner of the great hall, or "Schutting," as it was called, was hung with tapestry, adorned with the arms of all the courts of the Factory, and behind this was a bench provided with a good store of rods. This corner then received the name of "Paradise." A solemn procession was now made, headed by the council and House-Fathers in grand costume, attended by troops of maskers in quaint disguises, and jesters, who alternately addressed the people in doggerel rhymes, squirted dirty water at them, or laid about them with a long whip.

After making the grand tour of the city and the Factory, the procession returned to the Schutting, where the solemnity was held, and where one of the House-Fathers now made a speech, exhorting the novices to industry, fidelity, and general good behaviour and concluding by a declaration that any one who feared to play out the game was at liberty still to draw back. As the young men, however, were usually too bold, or too fearful, to shrink from the ordeal, they generally contented themselves with begging for a merciful chastisement, and the pleasant sport proceeded to the next act, which consisted in taking them one by one into "Paradise," and inflicting on them so severe a flogging that their garments were often dyed with blood. After this, a banquet took place, at which the unfortunate novices were required to act as waiters; and if they gave any signs of pain or weariness, they were forthwith pitched into the water to keep up their spirits.

Few things in the "good old times," appear more puzzling than "merrie jests" of this nature. It seems hard to believe that they had their origin in sheer cruelty, delighting in the infliction of suffering. They were not founded on the principle of the monkish flagellations—that of carrying on "war to the knife" against the flesh; and they must have been inexpressibly more bitter to the sufferers, from the appearance of mockery by which they were accompanied.

The ideas of pleasure entertained by an individual or a nation are among the circumstances most significant of

their character ; and there are few aspects in which the life of the middle ages appears less inviting than in that of their recreations. In the cities especially, the engrossing cares and exhausting toils of worldly business, in the absence of intellectual culture, were apt, as they are at all times, to leave the mind in no condition to enjoy or understand any very refined pleasure ; but we must not forget that the opposite extremes of idleness and frivolity lead precisely to the same result. Both produce a mental state, in which no other pleasure is possible than that of mere animal excitement.

We need not go back to seek for examples amidst the effeminate luxury of the later emperors of Rome ; we may find them even in courts of the present day\* ; and in the Hanseatic cities, where men were intently occupied in accumulating the wealth by which alone they could maintain their place in the world, the public amusements were, it must be confessed, often extremely stupid and coarse. We hear, for instance, that in Stralsund, in 1415, it was a favourite diversion to put several blind men along with a hog into an enclosed space in the market-place. They were armed with clubs, with which they were to strike the animal if they could, but the grand fun was, that they of course much more frequently belaboured each other. What shall we say, too, to that exploit of the "Cat Knight," who received the honour from a burgomaster of patrician family for biting a cat to death ?

Their diversions, however, were not all of this low order ; and the May festival bore much of the pretty poetical character that has attended it in all times and nations. On account of the cold, raw climate of Northern Germany, the celebration was sometimes deferred, indeed, till the first of June ; but on that day the youngest senator rode out of the city gates in full armour, and attended by troops of his kindred and colleagues, and of the young and wealthy citizens, splendidly mounted and caparisoned. On his return he was met by throngs of people with green boughs and garlands, and saluted as

\* The fair Majesty of Spain, for instance, clapping her hands in ecstasy at the spectacle of the blood and tortures of the bull-fight.



"Conqueror of the Winter," and he then rode amidst loud triumphant music into the city, where all houses and churches were adorned with branches of young fir and beech, and the streets were crowded with gay and noisy spectators. It then became the duty of the "Conqueror of the Winter" to invite the rest of the senators and their wives to a banquet, at which a beautiful May countess or queen was chosen, and the May garland placed, with due solemnity, on the head of the senator next in the order of seniority. By degrees, indeed, since in this world "all that's bright must fade," the banquet came to be considered as the most important part of the ceremony, and the expense attending it so enormous, that an instance is mentioned of a senator of Stralsund fairly bolting when it came to his turn to "ride out to the May," and hiding himself in the town of Rostock, whence he was brought back by force to make himself agreeable. By 1560, the poetry of the May festival had degenerated to the dismal prose of a mere city feast, though redeemed, in some slight degree, from the resemblance to these enormities in our day, by the presence of wives and of the orphan children of departed senators.

Among the most favourite diversions of the free cities were the archery meetings, which answered the double purpose of maintaining and improving the skill of their bowmen, and of affording a welcome recreation; and as all classes took part in them also, they contributed not a little to counteract the evils of the existing social inequalities, and create feelings of sympathy and brotherhood even with the lower orders, who were still far from the legal enjoyment of freedom. This was one, among many reasons, why the situation of the lower classes in the free cities was so far superior to that of the peasants, who had no share in the enjoyments of those above them, but on the contrary, whose bitterest grievances often arose out of the pleasures of their lords.\*

\* As in the case of Barnebo Visconti, who kept 5000 hunting dogs, which the peasants and citizens had to support. Every month the overseer of these dogs went round to examine them, and see whether they were too thin or too fat, and in either case, the people who had the charge of them were severely punished, so that this functionary was more dreaded than any officer of state.

Nurnberg was especially distinguished for the splendour of her popular festivals, in which even the learned and sedentary classes exercised their manual dexterity. At a grand archery meeting which took place in the sixteenth century, one Dr. Hoffner, a learned jurist, who, though he possessed "many dusty books," not to count what he carried in his head, was accounted one of the best shots in Nurnberg, and carried off several of the first prizes. More than once he won a live ox—a somewhat embarrassing prize, one might think, to a literary man. For a long time before these celebrations, the most elaborate preparations went on: for one which took place so late as the year 1579, we find that a hundred gold medals were struck, having on one side the arms of the city, and on the reverse, a rhyme declaring that they were for the most skilful bowman. An extensive meadow in the neighbourhood was fitted up for the reception of guests, with twenty-one large and handsome tents divided into compartments for banqueting and divers sports; and a piece of ground for practice in shooting, appropriated to each, and separated by columns painted red and white, "most pleasant to behold" (*gar lustig und schön*), and at certain distances was a "beautiful bower with green boughs," and in the midst of the boughs there was a garland; and in the midst of the garland, a shield with the coat of arms of the city for which the tent was destined, or for the seven electoral princes, spiritual and temporal, or other princes or nobles from the Palatinate, Bavaria, and Franconia, and even for guests from Switzerland and still more distant places; whilst high over all, as was proper, floated the eagle of the Holy Roman Empire. The archery-ground was also decorated in a manner "*gar lustig und schön*;" and upon it was seen a painted figure of the goddess Fortune, holding in her hand a red silk banner, which waved hither and thither, and was never for a moment steady in one place, "as the manner of fortune is."

"And so when all was ready, and the prizes and stakes set, they began to shoot, *in God's name*, on the 25th of July, and the shooting lasted six days, till the 31st; and one of Augsburg, Steffan Riedl, a bow-maker and inn-

keeper of that city, gained the first prize of 100 gold gulden, by thirteen unequalled shots; but a bolt-maker of Nurnberg kept close up to him, not having missed one out of twelve. Afterwards, the prizes were carried round in grand procession, with banners and music (the renowned trumpets and pipes of Nurnberg, by a company of little boys dressed in silk and velvet, with silver daggers and gold chains, having for their captain a great fat man, whose extraordinary dimensions, both lengthways and breadthways, had obtained for him the appellation of "the Ox." At the end of the day, a great company escorted the best archer, by moonlight, back to his quarters, with all due honours, and all the guests were hospitably and sumptuously entertained by the senate, mention being especially made of an evening potation of "half a pailful" of wine, which it is stated in the chronicles was emptied by many of the visitors. The pail used in Nurnberg must, we presume, have been of somewhat different dimensions from ours. On the great meadow where the tents were pitched, the "Hallerwiese," a kitchen of vast dimensions, was erected, where roast meat of all kinds, as well as geese, ducks, and other poultry, and a proportionate quantity of beer and wine, supplied good cheer to those of a lower class, and the excellence of the "roast pig" has been thought worthy of especial commemoration.

The decay of these southern cities is attributed by Æneas Sylvius to two causes—the excess of pleasure and the abundance of princes. The Hansa flourished unimpaired in wealth, power, and fame, till towards the end of the fifteenth century, and at last languished and died of a disease which, more or less, has seized on all corporations, namely, selfishness—the divellent force which is perpetually tending to rend asunder all human society, and must inevitably do so, when not restrained by some powerful antagonistic action.

There is little doubt that the corporation spirit, which had originally been a main cause of their strength, and greatly favoured their advancement, at a later period, proved its most powerful obstacle. The numerous guilds and trade unions, which once had only in view the main-

tenance of order and the improvement of various arts, degenerated gradually into little close bodies, whose only object was the exclusion of all rivals, and the maintenance, by the most unjustifiable methods, of the prices of their wares.

The league became divided by a thousand jealousies and rivalries ; first, of class against class, and then of city against city ; and the power of religion now no longer served to bind men together, but, on the contrary, itself furnished one of the most active causes of division. Of the domestic history of these cities, scarcely any notice has been left beyond those dry bones which give little more idea of the life of the time than the skeleton does of the warm breathing form of flesh and blood that once clothed it. The great, the paramount importance of cities to the happiness and progress of mankind, was not during the middle ages, perhaps is not yet, fully acknowledged ; and whilst the most frivolous details connected with chivalry, or with the pageants of courts and kings, have been recorded at full length, scarcely the most meagre outline has been preserved of the manifold and abounding life of these busy communities during their period of vigour and prosperity. Most of them have been incorporated with the different monarchical states of Germany, and exhibit but the shadows of their former greatness. The once proud and mighty Lubeck has a forlorn and ghostly aspect, and must probably perish if she cannot release herself from the deadly embrace of Denmark. The remaining three of the still free cities have, after a long period of torpor, during the present century, awakened as "giants refreshed by sleep." In them, beyond question, if anywhere, lies now the hope of Germany. In them is still preserved a spark, which, for all that has come and gone, may yet blaze forth into a greatness and glory hitherto unknown to our well-beloved cousins of the good old Teutonic stock.

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## CHAPTER V.

## FATHERS OF THE DESERT.

BETWEEN the superstitions of an early and of a late age there is all the difference that there is between a first and second childhood—the one is full of hope and promise, the other, a certain symptom of decay: and the outward form of institutions, once not only suitable, but becoming and lovely, may, with the progress of time, become absurd and inapplicable, as the garments of childhood to a more advanced period of life. It is necessary, perhaps, to say thus much by way of protest, in order to avoid being suspected of intending an oblique hint, that the restoration of monasteries would be desirable, if we cannot avoid acknowledging that there was much in the spirit that led to their foundation that was and is admirable for all time—much that is even peculiarly needed at the present day, and which we should do well to appropriate, if we could. The aspect of either an individual or a society, which having acknowledged a certain rule of right, has resolved, at all sacrifices, to live up to it, is at all times a spectacle to rejoice at, and never more so than now, when we talk plausibly enough of the insignificance of outward circumstances, and the far higher importance of the dispositions of the heart, sometimes perhaps by way of excuse for suffering those circumstances to float us on whether they may. Monasticism was a resolute attempt to subject the outward to the inward life; and through whatever devious paths it may have wandered, it set out from the true and high principle, that the spiritual and immortal man should attain dominion over the mere animal nature; and it grounded itself on the undeniable truth, that the indulgences of the senses “war against the soul.” The objects it has in view are to us also true and holy, though we may differ as to the means of their attainment; yet even in these the monks were not perhaps wholly wrong. Solitude and silence are un-

questionably among the means of spiritual elevation; poverty is, in most instances, healthful to the soul, a means of obtaining a simplicity good for both body and mind; obedience is, beyond doubt, the school of patience in which we best learn to combat our original sins of pride and self-will; but we have learnt, from the experience of the ascetics, a juster measure for these things, which, perhaps, *à priori*, we might not have been able to discover. They have tried the experiment for us; and now that its history is before us, it is easy to determine that the attempt to rend asunder the two natures so wonderfully combined in us, to put asunder what God has joined, is one that cannot come to good.

Solitude, though often beneficial to full minds and active intellects, is more than the vacuity of ignorance can support. Poverty, pushed as it was by the ascetics to the excess of destitution, tends, it is to be feared, to blight both body and soul; obedience, carried beyond reasonable limits, leads to abject meanness and hypocrisy, as the history of convents in general will abundantly show. Yet, after making whatever deductions we fairly can for their mistakes, we still find, in the history of these singular institutions, much that is worthy of our deepest study; and the more so, the more firmly we are convinced of the utter impossibility of their restoration. How necessary to all excellence is a certain contempt of life—how few are our real wants—how the humblest, narrowest path may be cheered, consoled, illumined by light from above; these, and many more such lessons, we may learn from the much vituperated monks, to whom the world has been indebted for much of its intellectual and spiritual progress. They did not always pass their days in lazy luxury, nor in mere dulness and unmeaning self-mortification; they studied the mysteries of nature and of man, astronomy, morals, and religion; they were legislators and physicians, poets and mechanical inventors; they provided for their own wants and those of the poor, and led, in many instances, pure, peaceful, industrious, and truly holy lives. It may be said that such as these were the exceptions; but in what society has virtue and excel-

lence ever been otherwise than an exception? The faults of the monks are more striking than those of other men, partly because in their vows they have furnished us with a standard by which to measure their failures; and we often ascribe to the institution of monasticism itself the corruptions and abuses of its period of decay; but as these corruptions were direct departures from all its laws, it would be scarcely more unfair to charge on Christianity the faults and vices of those who live without the slightest attention to its precepts, merely because they call themselves Christians.

In the cloister were to be found the sublimest and the meanest, the happiest and the most miserable, of the human race; and the great evil of conventual life, the very head and front of its offending, its idleness, was not so much an evil inseparable from its existence, as one belonging to its period of natural decline. As long as the convents had work to do, they were often well-springs of spiritual life and blessing; when it was done, they became foul and stagnant pools, breeding only noxious vapours.

Monasticism was a plant that entwined itself indeed with Christianity, but it sprung from an older root. In almost all ancient religions, we find a solitary life regarded as one of peculiar holiness. Amongst Hindoos and Egyptians, Israelites and Chinese, we find men devoting themselves to seclusion, as a means of attaining the highest spiritual perfection. Far from the passions and the tumults of the world, they hoped to raise themselves to a higher condition of existence, by occupying themselves exclusively with contemplations on the nature of God, and of the future and invisible world, without considering that we have not materials enough to employ ourselves sufficiently with these high themes. There is little doubt that the attempt ended mostly in mere stupidity, and the negation of all thought, and not unfrequently in absolute insanity. A few words of an old writer are very suggestive of the kind of life often led by these solitary men. "Every other minute he comes out of his cell—then goes in again—then comes out again to look if the sun is not

near setting ;"—a restless, aimless movement, that reminds one of the incessant roving of a wild animal in confinement round the narrow precincts of a cage.

It was in Egypt, that hot, damp, unwholesome, melancholy land, always fertile in monsters, that the most painful and ludicrous excesses of Christian asceticism were seen. Its deserts and rocks offered most facilities for a life of gloomy seclusion, as well as a refuge from the sanguinary persecutions to which the early Christians were often exposed ; and to escape from these, as well as from the sight and contamination of an all-pervading profligacy painful to their awakened moral feeling, was often their first inducement to hide themselves in the desert. From a very early age there were found, both in Egypt and Syria, men who maintained that Christianity consisted chiefly in the contempt and the renunciation of all the enjoyments of life—in the repression of all natural impulses—the rupture of all social ties. "Life is short," said the heathen, "let us enjoy it while we may." *Carpe diem*, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." "Life is short," said the Christian ascetic, "and of no worth at all in itself. But crucify the flesh, and you shall enter the kingdom of heaven."

The ascetics of Egypt were of two classes—Cenobites or monks, who occupied separate cells in a sort of street or village within an enclosure, but took their meals together, and others called anchorites or hermits, who dwelt in caves in the rocks. Some of these had built themselves a still narrower abode, a kind of living tomb, from which they never stirred ; with two holes, one to look into the church or chapel to which they were attached, another, to receive the food brought to them by the charitable. Some professed never to sleep, and sang, or prayed, or howled all night ; others had themselves chained up like wild beasts, or crawled on the ground, eating grass ; or at best the herbs, roots, and berries which they found there ; and the exploits of Simeon, on his column forty feet high, and of similarly adroit saints, are well known.

As nothing is more infectious than insanity, this kind of holiness spread more widely than might have been anticipated ; and when it was found that it had its reward



even in this world, in the admiration and reverence of the people, it began to be adopted on different motives by many who had no partiality for work, and liked an easy gentlemanly profession. Of such recluses as these St. Augustine gives no very good character. "They pretend to be fasting," he says, "when they are so full that they are ready to burst. They pretend to renounce society, but are secretly visited in their cells by the most abandoned people. They come into Jerusalem on festival days barefoot and dripping with blood, from thorns that they have stuck into their flesh, clothed only in skins, with a girdle of palm-tree bark, and tear their beards before the people, who load them with presents, and then they go back, secretly rejoicing, to the desert, and indulge themselves in all kinds of excess."

Many of these hermits were, however, of a very different order, and besides unquestionable sincerity of religious feeling, have left evidence in many of their maxims of a sounder understanding and greater intelligence than we might have been disposed to give them credit for; and if their disciples, while recording the facts of their history, have sought to adorn them with all the finery they could muster in the shape of miracles and wonders, the falsehood or the fiction is so transparent, and so characteristic of the writers, that it would be a pity to strip it off. It is worth while to glance at one or two specimens of the legends concerning them, as the kind of food which formed for a considerable period the principal mental nutriment of so large a class of our ancestors.

One of the earliest, or, it is sometimes said, the earliest of the legitimate "fathers of the desert," was a certain Paul of Thebes, who, in the third century, fled from the persecutions of the Emperor Decius. He found a spacious cave, with an opening shaded by a palm-tree, and near it a gushing fountain; in short, quite a snug little retreat for a saint, and lived there, as stories tell, more than ninety years, leading the life "more of an angel than of a man." About this time another saint, St. Anthony, who was living in a different part of Egypt, was favoured with a vision of this holy hermit, whom he had never seen, and whose name and address was not communicated,

but whom he was nevertheless appointed to seek out. He set forth accordingly, though he knew not in what direction to turn his steps, but on his way he met with a monster of the centaur species—half man and half horse—who begged the favour of his prayers for him and his brethen, and possibly directed him on his road; for on the third day he found Paul, and they saluted each other by their names immediately, though before mutually unknown. On this day the raven, who for forty years had brought the holy man his bread, considerably brought a double portion. There now arose a polite contest as to who should break it first; Paul declined doing so, because Anthony was his guest; Anthony insisted that it should be Paul, on account of the reverence due to age. At last they agreed to break at the same time, took a social cup of water together, and then spent the night in prayer. The next day Paul questioned his guest as to how things were going on in the world, what emperor was reigning over it, and whether men still continued to “build houses and lead evil lives.” He also gave Antonius a commission to fetch him a certain mantle which he had left in a city in Egypt, in order that his body might be wrapped in it after his death, which he foresaw was approaching. Antonius hastened back on this errand, and was eagerly questioned by his pupils as to what he had seen, but he answered only “There is a time for speech and a time for silence,” and hurried to the desert again; but on his way he beheld the soul of Paul already glorious in a state of beatification among angels, and prophets, and apostles; and on reaching the hermitage found his earthly frame still kneeling, with raised head and clasped hands. He buried it with the assistance of two lions, who acted as grave-diggers, for which service they received his blessing, and were, we cannot doubt, duly thankful; he then departed, taking with him Paul’s robe of rushes, which he ever afterwards kept and wore on full-dress occasions.

Of this Paul, we also hear that he declared that no monk could become perfect who did not labour with his hands,—a saying worth remembering, and one of the newest evangels preached among us in these latter days.

Antonius, who is considered the first monk (for Paulus

was an anchorite), and who was called the "Father of Monasteries," had, when a boy, fled from the society of his companions, and rejected books, saying he wanted no book but the book of nature. Other accounts say that his objection was not to all learning, but only to that of the Greek language, and that he both read the Bible and wrote in the common language of Egypt. He was born in Middle Egypt, in 251. When he was about twenty years old, after the death of his parents, happening one day to hear in a church the words "Go thy ways : sell all thou hast, and give to the poor," he immediately obeyed the injunction, and then departed to the desert, where he spent his time in prayer, fasting, and manual labour, not to mention a good deal that was employed in ill-treating his corporeal tenement, and maintaining pitched battles with devils, who "dropped in" continually on his retirement. He did what he could to free himself from this unwelcome company, and even took up his residence in tombs, but Satan would take no denial. At last resolving, one may suppose, to fight it out, the saint valiantly took lodgings in the ruins of an old castle, on the shores of the Red Sea, a well-known favourite watering-place of his satanic majesty, and terrible was the hurlyburly that now took place in this spacious and suitable *locale*. St. Antonius, however, kept it up for twenty years, notwithstanding many temptations and sufferings, especially terrible rheumatic pains in his limbs, which were, of course, not occasioned by sleeping in close damp holes, but merely by the malice of the infernals. Sometimes "auld clootie" would put on a reasonable, moral air, and say it was a pity to abandon all the good things of this world, and, moreover, leave, as Antonius had done, a young sister without any protection ;\* sometimes he would tease him with impertinent questions, such as : "Why Christians were in the habit at every little accident, of saying, 'The Devil take it ?'"

After the lapse of twenty years, Antonius returned

\* This was an unfounded accusation of Satan ; for it is expressly stated in the life of the saint that, previously to his retirement from the world, he had committed his sister to the care of some pious virgins.

again to the world, established several religious communities, and performed miracles at a great rate; and we hear, also, that in the persecution of the Christians in Egypt, by Maximin (311), he accompanied those who were condemned to prison to the tribunals, and to the final scene of their sufferings. For him, however, it appears the crown of martyrdom was not reserved, for he returned again to the desert, concealed himself in a remote spot from the admiration of his followers, and cultivated a piece of ground for his own subsistence; for with him also it was an established maxim, that "whoever will not work, should not eat."

At his death, he ordered that his remains should be buried in an unknown spot, that there *might be no idle practices with his relics*.\*

By the end of the fourth century, Egypt counted, according to the testimony of a traveller, Rufinus (373), as many monks in her deserts as inhabitants. Of Saint Benedict, the founder of the great, learned, numerous, and wealthy order that went by his name, who has been called the Patriarch of the Western Monks, we hear, in the first place, that he beat hollow all infant musical prodigies that have delighted later generations, for he sang psalms before he was born; secondly, that when he did take the trouble to be brought into this breathing world, it was in a *good* family, as the phrase is, in Italy, and in or about the year 480; but that, feeling disgusted at the state of morals in the metropolis of the world whither he had been sent for his education, he left it, and betook himself to the wilderness. He was accompanied by his nurse; and his first miracle was the putting handsomely together again the broken fragments of a vessel, for the loss of which she was one day weeping. After

\* His bones, or bones said to be his, were afterwards dug up, and in 980, brought to France, where they distinguished themselves particularly by the cure of a certain malady, called thence "St. Antony's fire," oddly enough, for it was the cure and not the disease which should have been named from the saint. Perhaps we may explain the *quid pro quo*, by the supposition that he treated it "homœopathically,"—a mode of treatment known before Dr. Hahnemann, and long ago described as by "a hair of the dog that bit you."

this, he spent three years in a cave or hole in a rock, clothed only in skins, so that the shepherds who saw him mistook him for some wild animal. He lived only on food let down from time to time into his cave by a neighbouring hermit, and was so absorbed in heavenly contemplation, that he would not have noticed the food, but that a little bell was attached to it. Stories tell, that Satan was spiteful enough one day to break his dinner-bell, by throwing a stone at it; and as the bell is still to be seen in Italy, and, moreover, with a little piece out of it, no one can doubt of the fact. The evil one, however, continued as usual to torment the saint, and chiefly by presenting continually the image of a certain beautiful brunette, whom Benedict had seen at Rome; and we cannot but mark it as an instance of ingratitude fully worthy of the devil, that he should have worried in this way almost all the holy men, even down to Dr. Martin Luther, to whom he is principally indebted for the renown he has gained.

Benedict's fame spread; and one Easter it was revealed in a vision to a priest, that there was a pious servant of the Lord languishing in the desert. He immediately sought him out, and a neighbouring convent elected him to be their abbot. It seems, however, that on account of the severe discipline which he wished to establish, the monks became soon dissatisfied with their choice, and even made an attempt to poison him; but when Benedict made the sign of the cross over the goblet containing the fatal draught, it burst into a hundred pieces, and Benedict soon after returned again to his cave in the wilderness. He was subsequently chosen again as the superior of a religious community, but was driven from it in terror, by the sight of seven beautiful damsels, who, by some diabolical machinations, had been admitted into the convent garden. He was now led by angels to a grove on Monte Casino, in Campania, where stood a temple dedicated to the heathen god Apollo, and, of course, the saint set immediately about to demolish it, and built a convent in its stead: but this Satan would by no means consent to, and threw all manner of obstacles in the way. Sometimes he bewitched the stones and wood employed for the

building, so that no force could move them from the spot ; sometimes he choked up the water-springs ; sometimes he pulled down in the night what had been built in the day, or threw it down, and buried the workmen in the rubbish ; but, fortunately, the saint beat him at last, and erected triumphantly the first convent of Benedictines, defying the devil and all his works.

For the embroidery of pious fiction with which his history has been adorned, the saint is, however, in all probability, little to blame. No trace of a heated imagination, far less of fraud, appears in the rules which he left for the regulation of his order, and which he himself most rigidly observed. He strongly urged the necessity of industry, abridged many tedious devotional exercises, and was entirely silent on the flagellations which make such a figure in the discipline of many of the monasteries, and which often led to such degrading follies. Before his time, the monks of Italy appear to have led a wild, dissolute kind of life, rambling about where they pleased, and each convent having its own rules, and many no rules at all. He first established among them a strict and regular rule of life, whilst he moderated their preposterous vigils and other excesses of asceticism. The abbots, according to his appointment, were to be chosen by the monks themselves, but when chosen, were to be rigidly obeyed. He enjoins them to be more anxious for the spiritual improvement of their convents, than for the increase of its worldly goods ;\* the monks are to divide their time between reading and manual labour, "for he can never be a true monk who does not earn his own subsistence ;" hospitality is to be observed towards all strangers, especially monks and pilgrims, and a stranger may remain as long as he pleases ; only in case he prove troublesome or greedy, he may be requested to depart. Artists who carry on their occupation in the convent shall do so under superintendence of the abbot, and shall

\* He seems to have intended, also, that each convent should contain only twelve monks ; but we hear that in less than two hundred years, there were as many as 300 Benedictine communities, in none of which were less than forty, and in many from one to two hundred monks.

always be willing to give their work for a lower price than that required by men of the world.

The monks of Monte Casino, in the eighth century, gave instruction in the healing art and in other sciences; were diligent copyists of classical authors; and even wrote some original works, not only on devotional subjects, but on others connected with natural philosophy; and the renown of their learning, and knowledge of medicine spread far and wide, so that in the fine time of the year visitors, especially the sick, came in crowds to enjoy the benefit of their advice. Everywhere the Benedictines became the most active promoters of intellectual culture, as it was then understood: in their houses, learned men found a safe and honourable asylum from the wild and barbarous tumults of the anarchical societies of Europe. Villages and towns sprung up around them: the monks cut down forests, drained marshes, cultivated fields and gardens, bestowed their superfluity on the poor, were often the benefactors of the whole country. They were diligent students, and conscientious instructors of the young. They softened the manners of rude men of war; restrained the caprices of arbitrary power; stood between the bondman and his oppressor; taught, or endeavoured to teach, the proud lord to look on the serf as a fellow-man and a Christian; stretched out a protecting arm over the weakness of sex, or age, or condition; united nation with nation, which might else have remained estranged for centuries, and breathed through the clash of arms the voice of mercy and love, which is the voice of Christianity.

Most of the arts which contribute to the necessities, convenience, and embellishment of life, were in Europe first cultivated in convents: to the Benedictines, Germany was indebted for her first knowledge of agriculture; her first vineyards and orchard; for numbers of valuable plants and productions of the south, which were by their care naturalized in her colder climate. In monasteries only, for many centuries, were libraries to be found; and things so rare and costly as books were often laid upon the altar *pro remedio animæ*, and fastened by chains, not, as has been falsely stated, to prevent access to them, bu-

merely to preserve property regarded as more valuable than silver and gold.

Nowhere else during the Middle Ages was learning revered as it was in the Benedictine monasteries, and their history might almost serve as the history of the intellectual culture of the period. They were, in many instances, little centres of light, throwing their beams far into the darkness around.

It was not always, or even in most cases, by mean arts that the early monks acquired their riches ; these were often the inevitable results of their knowledge, industry, and frugality. In the first instance, large tracts of land, before barren and useless, were bestowed upon them, and by their skilful and diligent culture became abundantly fruitful and productive. Their possessions were free from all burdensome contributions, and from the grasp of a rapacious nobility. The monks were excellent economists, and but little money was required for their simple mode of life. They could, indeed, scarcely avoid growing rich ; and as they certainly shared with their lay contemporaries in the opinion that wealth bestowed on the church benefited the soul of the giver, we need not necessarily suppose that even the doctrine of release from purgatory, obtained by such means, was on their parts always a deliberate falsehood devised for base and selfish purposes.

While it was still an error, merely, and not a fraud, it had at all events one beneficial effect, that of the manumission of slaves, who were often set free for the benefit of the dying master's soul ; but a doctrine that proved such a mine of wealth could not but become, sooner or later, an abundant source of corruption, although, as in other cases where imagined duty coincides exactly with interest, it may not be possible for a human eye to discover the precise point where the one motive ceases to act, and the other operates alone.

Without any precisely unfair practices on the part of the Church, the doctrine was tempting enough to bring many rich offerings to her shrine.

That for a piece of land thus bestowed, a departed husband, or wife, or child, might be saved from fearful and unknown pangs ; that a poor dying sufferer, tor-



mented by pains of body, and still more by grievous apprehensions for his soul, might, by the sacrifice of a possession now of so little value, of a small portion of the earth that was sinking beneath his feet, purchase immunity from, or at least mitigation of, future woes, more appalling in their cloudy horror than any certain punishment—such a temptation as this must have often proved irresistible. The welfare of the relatives to be left behind was often entirely lost sight of, in consequence ; and in the hands of the Church there rapidly accumulated a vast amount of the riches, said on the highest authority to be so dangerous to spiritual welfare ; but the peril of which both individuals and communities usually show themselves so valiant in braving.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MONKS IN EARLY TIMES.

IN England and Ireland the Anglo-Saxon Monks had held themselves aloof from the dissensions and the despotism of the Romish hierarchy, and the evil influence of the feudal aristocracy ; and often did not hesitate to condemn, in the strongest terms, the religious as well as political corruptions of the time ; it was to them also that the world was indebted for most of the pious and disinterested efforts made in that age for the conversion of the Germans and other heathen races.

In the seventh century St. Fridolin had founded the convent of Seckingen on the Upper Rhine ; St. Columban had preached the Gospel on the Lake of Constance ; St. Gallus had established his hermitage in the depths of a primeval forest, and founded the celebrated convent of St. Gallen ; St. Kilian had shed his blood as a martyr in Thuringia ; Saxony and Friesland, Franconia and Bavaria had witnessed the zeal of the holy men from Britain and

the Isle of Saints ; but, amongst all these, the one who has gained the greatest fame in Germany was the English Winifred, who, under his religious name of Boniface, has been called the Apostle of the Germans, as he was the first whose labours were attended by any considerable success. He had, at an early age, undertaken with a similar object a journey to the country of the Frislanders, but made little progress, and returned discouraged ; his conscience however left him no rest ; the example of St. Augustine, the apostle of the Angles, was ever before him ; and at length he set forth again, and after many difficulties reached the centre of Germany, and began to preach in the country which had a short time before witnessed the death of St. Kilian. Some seeds of the Christian faith had already been sown there, but the plants were feeble, and almost choked with weeds ; there were a few priests called Christians, but they were in the habit of offering sacrifices to the heathen idols, and mostly led scandalous lives. Boniface set to work in no lukewarm style ; cut down the sacred oaks, built chapels, and preached and baptized very zealously in Thuringia, Hesse, and Bavaria. We may smile at the summary and wholesale style of his conversions and baptismal operations ; but we may recollect that it was then a firm belief throughout Christendom, that whoever was once baptized was snatched from the power of the evil one, to which he was otherwise inevitably subject. To save souls from the dominion of the powers of darkness was not then a mere figure of speech : and the enthusiasm that induced men to devote their lives to such an object, an object that could only be attained through a thousand perils, is certainly not one at which we can afford to smile.

Boniface seems to have aimed at uniting more closely the body and spirit of the Christian Church of his age ; the power and discipline of the Romish hierarchy with the zeal and Christian love of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries. He did not content himself with making converts and establishing lonely hermitages in the woods, his plans extended to the complete reform of the Frankish Church, the reconciliation of all differences in the Christian world, and the association of all Christendom as one flock under

one shepherd, without regard to national distinctions. As a means to this end he contended vehemently for the general use of the Latin language, to which he found, then, even in the Church itself, many opponents. A Bishop Virgilius of Salzburg, an enlightened and learned man, who had gained great credit in the conversion of the Slavonic tribes, asked somewhat scornfully whether the mere words of baptism, pronounced in Latin by an ignorant German who did not know what he was saying, had a saving power, and Boniface boldly answered—*Yes*.

In the midst of a beech forest, in a wilderness, now Hesse Cassel, he founded the abbey of Fulda, which, perhaps, unfortunately for the cause of religion, in less than a century after, counted four hundred monks. Its abbot became a prince of the empire, ruled over a territory of a hundred and ninety-two square miles with eighty thousand inhabitants, and had a revenue of nearly thirty thousand a-year (above 350,000 florins). Boniface waxed more fast and furious as he continued his work; but, whilst carrying on his war against all idolatry, in the boldest and most uncompromising spirit, submitted with the most profound humility to the authority of Rome, sending thither for advice even in such important particulars as when it might be allowable to eat bacon, &c. Notwithstanding this somewhat excessive subserviency to the papal see, however, he had still sufficient independence of spirit to protest vehemently, both at Rome and in his letters to England, against the state of morals in the eternal city, when he had reason to fear it might contaminate his simple Germans.

In his 75th year, after he had become Archbishop of Mainz, Boniface resolved to make another attempt in favour of the souls of the Frieslanders, who it may be remembered had been the first objects of his apostolic zeal, but this proved to be the last of his labours, for he was murdered by them in the first year of his mission. Honoured be his memory! We can have no other measure of the merit of any one than that he shall diligently act up to what he in his conscience believes to be the rule of right. "Intense exclusive conviction," says a

sound thinker of our own day, "fastened on a single object, and discerning truth and right in nothing else, is the frame of mind, however unworthy of the philosopher, that fits men for decided vigorous action, and leads to immediate practical results." We have as much need to keep this principle in view, in judging the actions of Luther in the sixteenth century as of those of Boniface in the eighth ; and surely only the grossest injustice can pretend to find ambition or any other selfish motive as the governing impulse of his great undertakings ; for which he left a home where he might have led a tranquil and honoured life, and voluntarily encountered privation, peril and death.

It has been said that he planted Popery rather than Christianity ; but he could give only of what he had ; and it is possible that in the power and discipline of the papal hierarchy lay the only means of maintaining order in the Church in a barbarous age. At all events, the example of peaceful industry, of purity of life, and disinterestedness, set by many of the monks in the religious houses now established from the Maine to the Danube and the Harz mountains, was probably far more effectual and important than any speculative doctrines they may have taught.

One of the services, and not the least, which the monks rendered to their time, was in assisting to overcome the prejudice existing not only among these barbarous nations, but even in the most cultivated states of antiquity, that labour was degrading. Whilst nobles and warriors scorned every occupation useful to mankind, and trampled on the very hands by whose toil they subsisted, the monks showed the example of men honoured even as saints, who stooped to till the ground with their own hands, and perform without shrinking, even the lowest kinds of manual labour. These simple, narrow-minded men, on whom we are often inclined to look down with such a complacent feeling of superiority, had yet raised themselves high enough to see this matter from a point of view to which many of us have not yet reached, namely, to acknowledge that labour, under some form other, is alone honourable.

"Two men I honour,"—says one who pleads, "trumpet-tongued against the deep damnation" of the opposite doctrine—"First, the toil-worn craftsman, that, with earth-made implement, laboriously conquers the earth and makes her man's—a second still more highly, him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable—the bread of life." There were many of the early monks who, to the extent of their insight, united both these conditions.

The enthusiasm for monastic life seems to have been at its greatest height between the seventh and ninth centuries. The desolating storms by which society was shaken, remorse for crimes committed in the world, the hope of shelter from various dangers, brought even kings and queens within the sacred walls, which it was a merit merely to enter. But it must be obvious that such a life could at no time have been adapted to more than a small minority of mankind. When we hear, therefore, of the rapid and prodigious increase of these communities, we need not look into their chronicles to know what they must have become. Even Charlemagne already utters grievous complaints of the idleness, greediness, and immoderate self-indulgence of the monks, and renews the old law, forbidding any freeborn man to enter a cloister, "merely to withdraw himself from the service of the state;" not long before his death he instituted an inquiry into the state of morals in religious houses, and asked many questions, of the sort more easily asked than answered, such as "Whether one can be said to have left the world, when one continues to endeavour, by every possible means, to increase one's worldly goods?" "How, except by their dress, can those who have left the world be distinguished from those who still belong to it?" "Where Christ has taught that people may be forced to enter convents?" and such like troublesome queries.

With the decay of religion and morals, the learning of the monasteries of course declined, and in another hundred years there were in many convents monks to be found who were scarcely capable of reading their breviary. The tempest that broke over Europe in the invasions of the Northmen, the Hungarians, and other wild heathen

racés, produced also a great change in the character of these communities. In these terrible invasions the convents had always most to suffer; the barbarians broke open the tombs in search of buried treasure, tore up the records, burnt the books, tortured and murdered the monks, who were at length compelled to take up arms to defend their own lives, and the holy things intrusted to their care, as well as to arm in their service their vassals and retainers. Abbots and bishops were bound to render military service for the estates they held, and in many cases gained personal distinction for their martial exploits. The union of the religious and warlike character, therefore, which has in modern times been thought so incongruous, (though it is not easy to see why, if war be really a thing allowable to Christian men,) appeared perfectly in harmony with the spirit of the time; and the monastic military orders of knighthood were then no strange and monstrous anomaly, but a perfectly natural production of the soil on which they grew. Before turning to that part of our subject, however, we will search among the ruins of one of the most celebrated convents of the middle ages, for a few fragments that may serve to illustrate some features of the religious life of the time.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE ABBEY OF ALTENBERG.

NEAR the centre, of the former duchy of Berg, about thirty miles from Dusseldorf, and about a mile from the high road from Cologne to Berlin, in a deep valley surrounded by high wooded hills, lie the ruins of the former rich Cistercian abbey of Altenberg, for many centuries the resort of hundreds of pilgrims, and renowned far and wide for the wonder-working relics that it possessed, and for the efficacious prayers of the holy men who dwelt within its sanctuary. The ruins lie on the left bank of the Dhun, a forest stream abounding in trout

to the east : the outer wall of the abbey rises over a high steep ridge, and on the opposite shores of the stream the hills advance so close to its bed as to leave scarcely room for a narrow footpath along its banks. The valley is extremely fruitful, but the hills are stony and sterile, thinly scattered over with dwarf shrubs, heath, juniper, but frequently opening into ravines watered by sparkling rivulets, and abounding in the richest vegetation. Eastward from the abbey, in one of these ravines, lay the fish ponds which furnished so fine a provision for fast days to the convent ; and the tops of some even of the hills are flat and covered with farms, cornfields, and orchards. The air of the valley, low as it lies, is remarkably pure, and filled with the fragrance of innumerable flowers ; and in summer the entire sides of the hills are often lit up by the golden broom, and the rich crimson fox glove rearing its blossoms from amongst heaps of loose stones. A little canal was cut from the Dhun to obtain water enough to turn the abbey mills and fill the ponds inside the walls ; and between the canal and the Dhun lay a beautiful beech grove, the favourite abode of numerous nightingales, summoned thither, as every body knew, by the blessed St. Bernard. Not far off, on the summit of a precipitous rock, lay formerly the remains of a most ancient robber castle, destroyed by the Emperor Otto III. on account of the unchristian lives led by its owners ; and near that again the ruins of the castle of Berg, whose inhabitants, in point of morality, do not seem to have had greatly the advantage of their neighbours ; but its strength, magnificence, and favourable position near a great road induced the emperor, instead of destroying it, to bestow it in fief on a Count Hermann, who thence took the name of Count Vom Berge, or Count of the Hills. To one of his descendants the abbey owes its origin, and the community was first established in the castle of Berg itself, and only afterwards came down into the valley of Altenberg, where the beautiful abbey was built. In the chronicles of the twelfth century, still preserved there, and of which many copies have been taken, an account is given of the foundation of the monastery, which is very characteristic of the time.

“When the brothers, Adolph and Eberhard, Counts of Berg, also on account of their castle of that name, called Counts of Altena, were engaged in an expedition of the Duke of Limburg against the Duke of Brabant, it happened that many persons were killed on both sides, and that Count Eberhard, when he had returned home with his men, was seized with grief and remorse for the massacre that had taken place. In the hope of obtaining from the Lord the pardon of his sins, he exchanged his costly attire for a mean and homely disguise, and in the silence of the midnight fled from his castle and his people, and set off on a pilgrimage to the tombs of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and afterwards to that of St. Jago di Compostella. Thence he took his way to the tomb of the blessed St. Egidius, and returning towards his own country reached a farm belonging to the convent of Morimund, from which it was distant about four hundred paces. There, in order to devote his soul wholly to God, he entirely renounced his noble rank, and served in the farm as a swineherd for wages. After some time, it happened that two of his vassals also had undertaken a pilgrimage to the grave of St. Egidius, arrived at this very farm where Count Eberhard was herding swine, and not well knowing their way, and seeing no one else near, sent a squire\* who accompanied them to inquire the road. When, however, the squire came up and looked closely at the swineherd, he immediately recognized on his face a remarkable scar of a wound received by Count Eberhard in the late feud, and hurried back to the knights with the wonderful news—‘My lords, the Count Eberhard is keeping swine upon this farm.’

“They, however, to whom the story appeared quite incredible, severely reprovèd their servant, but approached the herdsman nevertheless, to ascertain whether he could possibly have spoken the truth. The herdsman at first made as if he did not know them, but at length revealed himself to them, much in the same manner as Joseph did

\* The narrative is confirmed, in all essential particulars, by other accounts, which differ only in trivial matters, such as that of saying that the person by whom the Count was recognised was a jester instead of a squire.



to his brethren in Egypt. And when he had done so, the knights threw themselves from their horses upon the bosom of their lord, and embraced and kissed him with tears of joy, and then went back with him to the farm to which he had hired himself as a servant. The farmer to whom they related the whole matter could also not believe it, and at night he ran to the neighbouring convent, and told it all to the Abbot. In the morning came the Abbot with his Prior and his Cellarer, wondering not a little, and heard from the Count himself and from his knights that it was even so. Thereupon the Abbot perceived the truth of what the farmer had told him, and that it was the wonderful providence of God that had sent the Count thither; and he advised him accordingly, for the remission of his sins, to become a member of the holy brotherhood of Morimund. Count Eberhard, as he had already much clerly skill, readily agreed to do so, and went back with the Abbot to the convent, and became a very zealous monk." Instances of voluntary self-abasement, like that of Count Eberhard, were in those days by no means unheard of. It was about the same time (1227) that Adolph, Count of Holstein, had shown a similar example of devotion. At Bornhöved, near Kiel, a great battle was to be fought with the then powerful King of Denmark. Adolph, with three hundred chosen knights, the stately Burgomaster, Von Saltwedel, with his Lubeckers in the rear, and the Archbishop of Bremen with his troops, were to try their strength against the whole force of the tyrannical and hitherto victorious Waldemar. It was the day of St. Mary Magdalen, the beginning of the dog days: the heat was intolerable; and the Lubeckers had sun, and wind, and dust, in their faces, ~~and~~ were beginning to give way to the superior force opposed to them, when Adolph sprang from his horse, and kneeling, with outstretched arms vowed to abandon all earthly state and pass his life in a cloister, if but for this once he might gain the victory. The Lubeckers, inspired by his example, vowed in a loud voice to devote the castle to the service of Heaven if they might take it from the Danes, and immediately the blessed St. Magdalene herself appeared in the sky, and extending her veil (which to

some looked very much like a cloud) so as to shield them from the sun, enabled the troops of Adolph to see their enemies, and they gained a splendid victory. The bargain with the saint was honourably kept ; the castle was turned into a Dominican convent, and Count Adolph, after joining for a few years a crusade against the heathen in Liefland, abdicated his dominions in favour of his two sons, and entered a convent of the Franciscans, a Mendicant order in Hamburg, which he had himself founded ; and the warrior and the prince renounced thenceforth all the pleasures and honours of the world, and passed his days in labour and prayer, and humbly asking alms for his convent and for the poor. Whenever he was recognised, so noble and pious a suppliant could hardly fail of receiving an offering ; and, with the voluntary contributions of devout Christians, he amassed a sufficient sum to build another convent. On one occasion it is said he exhibited, in a moment of human frailty, some symptoms of being ashamed of the way of life he had adopted. He was going his usual rounds through the city, and had just received in charity a pot of milk, with which he was hastening home to his brethren, when his attention was attracted by martial sounds ; the neighing of steeds, and the clattering of hoofs ; and, looking towards one of the gates, he saw a warlike troop entering the city in all the pomp and pride of chivalry, with waving plumes, and spears and helmets, glancing in the sun. For a moment the recollections and the feelings of his former state overpowered him ; he hid his pot of milk, and was turning away to hide himself ; but after a moment's reflection, with an heroic effort, he overcame this weakness, and pouring the milk over his shaven head in token of humiliation, fell on his knees, and implored of the knights, who were riding by, alms for a poor Mendicant brother, for the love of God. The knights, who proved, as they came nearer, to be his two sons, the Counts Johann and Gerhard, bestowed it liberally, and rode on without recognizing, probably without looking at, the Mendicant friar. Adolph lived many years more ; but, according to the legend, never from that time uttered any other words than " Memento mori." But to return to the monks of Altenberg.

“After this it pleased God for the glory of his name, and for that of the holy mother of God, the blessed Virgin, and for the increase of the Cistercian order, that Eberhard, with the permission of the Abbot of Morimund, went to pay a visit to his beloved brother, Count Adolph, who, with many praises of his devout life, bestowed upon him the castle of Altenberg, and the lands belonging to it, for the erection of a Cistercian convent. Everhard came back rejoicing and praising God, who had heard his secret wishes; and after that it came to pass that he went into Thuringia to visit Count Sieghard of Kefernberg, and his Countess Gisela, who were also of his kindred; and when he had given them many exhortations for the good of their souls, he finished by advising them to build from their wealth a Cistercian convent.”

Chiefly by the entreaties of his consort Gisela, Count Sieghard at length consented to do so, and bestowed for this purpose the valley of St. Georgsburg, with all the lands and privileges thereunto belonging, though not without the consent of his lawful heirs, their sons Heinrich and Gunther, “for the honour of Jesus Christ the Almighty, and the blessed Virgin his mother, and the holy martyr St. George, and the blessed Saint Benedict; and Eberhard praised the Lord for all, and returned with many thanksgivings to his convent, and told the Abbot and the community of all that he had done, for which they gave him great praise.”

“And after all things had been duly discussed and considered in the convent, a sufficient number of monks and novices, of the strictest life, were sent out to found the new community; and for his great piety they with one voice chose Eberhard for their spiritual father; and by the venerable Archbishop of Maintz, he was consecrated to be the first Abbot of the convent of Georgsburg in Thuringia; and in the year of our Lord 1133, the remainder of the community of Morimund, under Abbot Berno, left Morimund, and entered the castle of Altenberg; on which day, also, there was so great an eclipse of the sun, that the stars could be seen at noonday.

The half-decayed mountain castle, where the community was now established was found, however, to be in

some respects unsuitable to its new destination, and the Abbot Berno, therefore, with the consent and assistance of the Counts of Berg, proposed to build a new convent down in the valley, where already, on a pleasant meadow land, stood a chapel dedicated to the blessed Virgin.

When the monks were called together to consider of the precise spot where the edifice should stand, it was found that they could by no means agree about it; some thought it should be built at the northern entrance of the valley, others that it should be at the foot of the castle hill, others again, that it should be immediately on the banks of the Dhun. In this dilemma Abbot Berno, according to the narratives of the monks, proposed what seems a curious method of coming to a decision.

Modern frivolity feels tempted to giggle when it hears that the animal always in especial favour with the monks was the ass. His simplicity of manners, humility of carriage, and usually taciturn habits—the sign of the cross which he bears on his back—the manner in which he hangs his head, as the rules of most orders command the pious brethren themselves to do—the patience with which he submits to discipline—all this naturally recommended him to these devout recluses, and they were always ready to exclaim with our modern English poet, “I hail thee brother,” and to employ him in the most important business, and even to regard him as a kind of oracle in difficult cases.

It was, we may recollect, not merely the spirit of monasticism, but the spirit of all those ages, to see in what we call trivial chances the ordination of a higher power. Do we not find in the history of Nurnberg that in the fourteenth century, two hundred years after the building of Altenberg convent, a worthy and respected burgher of that city, one Berthold Tucher, of the renowned family of that name, wishing to know whether it was the will of God that he should remain in the world and marry again, or take holy vows and devote himself to the monastic life, did, after praying devoutly in the little chapel in his house, “at the corner of the Milk Market, there where you turn into Dog Alley,” resolve to ascertain the divine

pleasure by the simple method of tossing up a half-penny?

Three times did he toss it accordingly, and three times did it come up heads, and thereupon he accepted the oracle, and went directly and fetched himself a wife.

Even so did the monks of Altenberg now resolve to devolve upon the ass the business which had proved too weighty for themselves. The highly honoured Neddy was conducted accordingly to the gate of the castle, laden with the money to be expended for the building, and with the insignia of the convent, and then left to take whatever way might in his wisdom seem good to him.

Slowly and deliberately did he pace down towards the valley, the monks following at a reverential distance: now and then the sagacious animal stopped and cropped a thistle, doubtless to give himself time for reflection, and occasionally he stood still and looked around, as if to consider the capabilities of the place. He went on till he entered a shady grove, that afforded a delicious refuge from the burning rays of the afternoon sun, and stopped where a bright rivulet, trickling from the Spechtshard, and marking its course by a strip of the liveliest green, fell into the beautiful Dhun. The monks watched him with breathless expectation; for here they thought would be a delightful spot, and they dreaded lest he should go further. The respectable animal, after due consideration, slowly stooped and tasted the water, and then that he might omit no means of forming a correct judgment, began to try a little of the fragrant grass that grew in rich abundance on the banks. At length he lay down, and having apparently quite made up his mind, rolled over "heels upwards," and gave vent to his feelings in the trumpet tones of a loud and joyful bray. His sonorous voice was drowned in the exulting psalms of the monks—and on this, the loveliest spot of the whole valley, the sacred edifice was erected.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ABBAY OF ALTENBERG.

THE Abbey of Altenberg, such as it appeared in its days of splendour, was not the work of a few years or of one man. For a long period it was the favourite object, on which were lavished the best powers, the industry, and the wealth of its peaceful inmates, who had few personal wants, and none that their own industry did not supply. It was not in those days thought sufficient that a church should be a convenient building tolerably well adapted to its apparent use, it should serve to the imagination as the purest, noblest symbol of the Divinity, and embody to mortal sight the sublime emotions, that words can scarcely convey. A living spirit should be breathed into the heavy mass of stone, and no trace of toil or effort should appear to mar its beauty : grand and vast in its proportions as human hands could make it, it should yet seem light and graceful, as a plant springing from its native soil. Every part should, if possible, have a symbolical meaning : the rose, so often seen on windows, archways, doors, and the capitals of columns, was in the middle ages the accepted symbol of the world of the senses, and the cross reposing within its cup that of faith : the tall columns and lofty towers should suggest the aspirations of the soul towards her native skies ; and the sublimity of the whole should be in a manner withdrawn from the eye, in the richness and elegance of decoration of each part, as the Deity may be said to hide himself in nature beneath myriads of beautiful forms ; yet one spirit should be breathed throughout its manifold details, one fundamental form return in a thousand changes.

In these great works, what the genius of one man had conceived was to occupy the industry of successive generations of skilful hands in its execution ; and most admirable is the pious diligence and self-denial with which masters, capable themselves of great designs, often toiled for half their lives in the expression of the thoughts of others, regarding only the work, without a thought of the fame

that might attend it. In many instances, the names of him who planned and of him who executed have remained alike unknown.

The Abbey, with all its buildings, when finished, covered a space of upwards of seven acres, and was surrounded by extensive gardens, orchards, and groves.

The Church, which still exists, and is in the finest style of ancient Gothic architecture, is built in the form of a cross, and covers a space of 27,000 Prussian square feet. It consisted of a centre and two side aisles, supported on columns with richly gilt capitals, and attached to it were thirteen chapels, all finished in the most beautiful and elaborate style.

Over the chief entrance shone, in a thousand gorgeous dyes, a magnificently-painted glass window, adorned with figures of scriptural personages in colours on a gold ground, and further enriched with ornaments of stone delicately and fantastically wrought; and, when the evening sun poured its beams through it, lighting up the whole church with many-coloured radiance. In different parts of the edifice there were also seventy-eight other windows decorated in a similar style.

In the earliest period there were no pictures in the Cistercian churches; but from the fifteenth century that of Altenberg was crowded with paintings and statues; one of its most peculiar decorations, however, consisted in many ribs and skulls, professedly of the renowned eleven thousand virgins, which, adorned with gold and silver ribbons, were hung up in various places, especially about the altars, of which there were twenty-four, besides the high altar. From the southern aisle of the church a lofty door opened on a flight of steps leading down to the cloisters and to the chapter-house; the roof of which, like that of the Church, was supported on columns of black marble with richly gilt capitals. A door beneath the great organ opened into the dormitory of the monks; a hall a hundred and ninety feet long, and seventy-five feet broad, also resting on marble pillars. The hospital, the library, the refectory, and every other part of the building, was on the same scale, notwithstanding the great expense of transporting building materials to this remote valley.

The abbey contained within its walls no less than eight reservoirs, to which the water was conducted in leaden pipes from the upper part of the valley. The great garden was laid out in the Italian style, and had spacious orangeries and forcing houses, as well as enclosures for preserving deer and other game, so that the kitchen might never want a supply ; but this of course in latter days, when the outward splendours of the abbey were but like the tints of trees in autumn, which, however gorgeous to the eye, are certain symptoms of decay.

The fundamental laws of the community of Altenberg were of course originally the same as those of other religious houses of that order—poverty, celibacy, obedience, carried to a point that to us is all but incredible. The Cistercian monk professed to be dead to the world, and to all social intercourse, even to that of his nearest relatives. If he met his father or his brother, it was his duty to pass by as if he had not seen him, for “for the dead there is neither father nor brother, but only God in heaven ;” and as the children of the world, however willingly they would converse with their departed friends, yet must submit to the severe law of nature which denies them this consolation, so must the monk, who having wholly renounced the world, has renounced with it the joys of domestic affection. We may mourn for the melancholy delusion which would lead to the needless renunciation of the purest happiness, and the holiest duties of life, but we cannot but look with respect on the heroic strength of soul that could enable men to make such a sacrifice ; here at least is the first condition of all virtue and all nobleness—the power that can place the world beneath our feet ; and it is well for us if, with clearer knowledge and more enlarged views, we have lost nothing of this spiritual force (which, doubtless, if we possess it we may turn to far better account), and are capable of showing ourselves as faithful to our wisdom as they were to their folly.

At the head of the Altenberg brotherhood stood of course the Abbot, to whose commands all were bound to render the most implicit obedience. It was long a subject of dispute whether, in case the Abbot were to com-



mand anything contrary to religion and the rules of the order, the monks were still equally bound to obey ; but that such a question should be raised is only one of the many instances of sound human reason breaking forth from self-imposed fetters ; for it is obvious that the monk is nowhere allowed to exercise his private judgment as to what is or what is not contrary to religion. The community had every inducement to use their utmost vigilance and discretion in the choice of a superior in whose hands they were to place such a trust ; and since they themselves, and no others, would have to pay the penalty of a fault, and suffer the consequences of a mistake, there was the best possible security, that they would make to the utmost of their ability a good use of their suffrage. The method of choice was by ballot. When an Abbot was to be elected, the brotherhood had to assemble in the chapter-house ; and after solemn prayer, and exhortation from the oldest priest of the order, to select, without fear or favour, him whom they should esteem the most capable of the duties of the office, every monk writing down the name of the brother for whom he voted on a piece of paper ; and putting it into an urn ; the eldest of the community then drew out the papers, and to him whose name most frequently occurred, the community immediately took the oath of allegiance : the kiss of peace was bestowed, and the new Abbot vowed to prove himself a just and good father to the convent. The choice was afterwards confirmed by the general of the order, and a solemn investiture performed by the bishop of the diocese. If, as it sometimes happened, the convent found reason to be dissatisfied with the superior they had chosen, they were in some cases permitted to complain to the general of the order, and he, or the pope, could institute a commission of inquiry ; and abbots were occasionally deposed, or suspended, and sometimes even subjected to disgraceful punishment, as in the case of a certain abbot of Altenberg, who, for having occasioned a fight among the brothers, was, by command of the pope, sentenced for eight days *to dine with the dogs*. The fault, however, in cases of disagreement, did not always lie on the side of the superior ; for he had often no

easy task to keep in order a society, which, however professedly submissive, always showed abundance of ingenuity in quibbling evasions of distasteful regulations, and like other sovereigns nominally despotic, the Abbot had, after all, to acknowledge many practical limitations to his authority.

The Prior was, like all the other officers, appointed by the Abbot. He shared in the fatigues of government, but had only delegated authority, and his office expired with the death of his superior. He, as well as the Abbot, acted as confessor to the monks, kept a vigilant watch over their morals, regulated matters connected with the service in the church, gave permission to the monks to *speak*, and to go out of the convent; and in general took the place of the Abbot in his absence. In some great convents deacons were also chosen, to assist the Abbot with their advice; and in affairs of importance it was usual to call together the whole community.

The Lector had the duty of reading to the brethren when at table, that they might not be exclusively occupied with ministering to the wants of the body, but might be supplied at the same time with spiritual food. He was chosen, like the cook, with whom he was to take his meals, merely for a week at a time, the monks taking both these offices in turn. In later times, however, the office of the Lector was made permanent, and higher scientific qualifications demanded of him.

The novice-master had, as his name implied, to attend to the instruction of the new members; the cantor to lead the musical service; the sacristan and the receptor to keep order in the church, and take charge of the sacred vessels; the cellarius to watch over the temporal welfare of the community, keep the books, and at the end of the year render up the accounts of the convent.

Besides the regular monks, there were in the abbey two other classes—the lay brothers, who took the same vows, and observed the same rules of life, but were distinguished by a difference of occupation, and by wearing a short dress of a dark-brown colour: they were only required to attend the early service, and neither sang in the choir, nor spent any time in “contemplation,” but

worked at some particular craft, for the good of the community. There were also the *conversi* or *fratres sinistri*, mostly persons of high rank, who wore the dress of the order, and observed the rules, but neither sang in the choir like the monks, nor worked like the lay brothers. They were called *sinistri*, because they occupied a particular seat at the left of the choir, a seat which, it is insinuated by the profane, was an especially snug one for a nap.

Lastly, there were the house brothers, or *familiares*, who, though they wore the tonsure and the same dress as the lay brothers, took no vow but that of obedience, and might, by permission of the Abbot, leave the convent and marry, being in fact merely servants. Besides all these, there were the "people," serfs or tenants on the abbey lands, who did not merely pay rent, but ~~were~~ bound to the performance of certain gratuitous services, or the payment of a weekly tribute; and these were numerous, as the abbey possessed extensive estates in many different parts of the country, independently of the lands immediately surrounding it.

It will naturally be supposed that the Arch-enemy of mankind in general, and of monks in particular, was vexed enough to see how prosperously things went on at Altenberg, and did not fail from time to time to find means of wreaking his spite. We find in the Chronicles, that in the reign of the Abbot Goswin, which lasted from 1181 to 1202, notwithstanding some molestation from unruly neighbours, the convent flourished more than ever, and many rich gifts were bestowed upon it; but far in worth above all its other acquisitions was one which, by the especial favour of Heaven, was made about this time—nothing less than some hundreds of the above-mentioned ribs of the eleven thousand virgins of the holy troop of St. Ursula, which were dug up in the valley of Altenberg in the year 1197.

Rejoicing not a little over such an unexpected treasure, the pious monks washed them with wine, anointed them with precious ointment, and laid them out on fair white linen, to dry on the seats of the chapter-house. Suddenly, however, to the astonishment of all present, there arose

from amidst these sacred relics so foul a smell, that even the monks, whose olfactory nerves, as every body knows, are not of the most fastidious, could not endure it, and were forced to run out. Abbot Goswin perceived immediately that this could be nothing else than an abominable trick of their old antagonist the devil, to disturb the devotion of the community, and making haste to don his sacred vestments, and summoning all necessary assistance, repaired to the door of the chapter-house, and opening it a little way, put his head in, and called out aloud, "I conjure thee, spirit of uncleanness, by Him who shall come to judge the living and the dead and to destroy the world with fire, that thou wilt *clear off* with thy infernal spells, and cease from stirring up this vile diabolical odour, which thou hast raised to deprive the blessed saints of the adoration which is their due." No sooner were these words uttered, than a great horse-bone suddenly arose from amongst those of the holy virgins, and flew away right out of the door of the chapter-house, as if driven by a storm-wind, whilst at the same time all the foul smell disappeared, and a delicious perfume arose, and diffused itself over the whole abbey.

One more instance of satanic wiles will we relate, "for the sake of edification."

In the year 1324, we have an account of a terrible flood, by which the entire valley of Altenberg was overwhelmed, houses washed away, trees torn up by the roots, corn washed out of the ground, and gardens laid waste. In the beautiful abbey church the water stood five feet deep, in the library and the storehouses for provisions fearful damage was done, and the courts were choked up with a mass of flint, stones, trunks of trees, mud, and ruins, which it required months to clear away. Some people assert that the occurrence of this catastrophe in the deep narrow valley might be explained from quite natural causes; but the monks knew better. They knew that Satan, and nobody else, was at the bottom of it, and they wrote the whole story twice over; once in prose and once in Latin rhyme, and had it graven on two tablets, which were hung up in the church of Altenberg for the edification of all pious Christians. According to this

authentic narrative, the malice of his infernal majesty had long been excited by the splendour of the new abbey church, which now rose like another Zion in surpassing beauty. On twenty-four altars, adorned with the most costly relics, the holy sacrifice was continually offered; the clear sound of the abbey bells filled the valley far and near with its melody, and the chants of the holy monks rose hourly like a sacred perfume to the Lord. Satan, ready to burst with spite and envy, tried in vain all the arts of hell to seduce the monks from the path of godliness; and when this failed, he made several attempts to destroy the stately edifice, with all that it contained, by setting fire to it over and over again. But happily the fires were always soon extinguished; for the diabolically-kindled flames grew pale, and expired before the light of the consecrated tapers, and ever-burning lamps. He now resolved, since he could not succeed with fire, to try what water would do; and for this purpose, on the 23rd of May, 1324, he collected a great mass of water in the upper part of the valley, and suddenly rolled down the enormous heap, amidst thunder and lightning and sulphureous vapour, right against the abbey walls. As the valley at this part opens into a wide basin, it is probable that if left to themselves, the waters might have now spread out, and gradually subsided; but to prevent this there stood the Wicked One, in *propria persona*, employing all his skill to drive up the waves from all sides against the church. In this he succeeded so well, that all the courts and halls became filled with water, mud, and rubbish, the walls trembled under the violence of the repeated shocks, the provisions were swept away, several of the monks drowned; and every one was too busy in endeavouring to save his life, to take any thought for the cause of the phenomenon—every one, except the venerable Abbot Reinhard, who even in this extremity proved a match for his wily antagonist. He was looking anxiously up and down the valley to ascertain if there were any chance of escape, when, casting his eyes in the direction of the Dhun bridge, there stood the father of all evil recognisable to all men by the loud hissing of the waters as they rushed past him. Quickly did the holy abbot

make the sign of the cross, and launch forth against him a powerful exorcism, when, behold ! Satan suddenly lost all his strength, insomuch that he could scarcely help being carried away himself by the torrent he had created. He then vanished, and the convent was saved from destruction ; but what an “abomination of desolation was left !” Pictures of saints, priestly vestments, tapers, books, and holy vessels, lay in the church tumbled together in heaps, and covered with stones and slime, the corn in the granaries was spoilt, the mills broken, all kinds of household utensils irretrievably damaged, fields, gardens, and orchards utterly wasted and destroyed. The victory over Satan had been dearly purchased ; but fortunately he was thoroughly humbled by it, and for many years afterwards did not dare to show his face again at Altenberg.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE ABBEY OF ALTENBERG.

THE employment of every moment of time was rigidly marked out for the monks of Altenberg, and divided between divine service, manual labour, meal times, and repose, and the minutest details of their deportment on all these occasions was exactly laid down for them.

At midnight the brethren arose to sing psalms, according to the text “*mediâ nocte surgebam ad confitendum tibi.*” At the sound of the bell every one had to hasten into the choir ; and if any one came too late he had to stand apart, in a place conspicuous to the whole community ; and whoever sang out of tune, or blundered over his prayers, and did not immediately correct himself, was subjected to severe punishment. Besides the midnight psalms and prayers there was also services of various kinds, *seven times* a-day ; and if a monk happened to be on a journey, he was nevertheless not to fail to repeat the appointed prayers at the due season.

The labour to be performed, and the hours at which it was to be done, varied of course according to the time of year, but manual labour was prescribed as absolutely necessary, not merely for the sake of the temporal welfare of the community, but also for the soul's health of each of its members. During the spring, summer, and autumn, the monks were obliged to work in the fields and gardens from the first to the fourth hour after sunrise, then till the sixth hour they were occupied with prayers. After these came the dinner hour, and they had then two hours to be employed in repose, or if they pleased in reading; but it was provided that every one in this case shall read "softly to himself, that he may not disturb others." From the eighth hour to vespers was again to be employed in labour; and if the convent were poor, so that the produce of their labour was needed, or at particular seasons, as at seed-time and harvest, it lay in the discretion of the abbot to allow the brethren to work all day in the fields, and sing the psalms in the open air, for the saving of time. In winter the morning was entirely devoted to reading, and only the afternoon to labour.

During the time destined to reading or contemplation, two aged monks were appointed to walk through the convent to see that the brethren were really engaged as they were supposed to be, and to give information of any that might be found idling or gossiping. After the third repetition of such an offence the monk was to receive *discipline*. Should any brother be found perchance too stupid to employ himself in reading or contemplation, some suitable occupation was to be found for him. No art and no handicraft was excluded, and whoever had a capacity for any occupation, might exercise it for the benefit of the community. Goods and materials were of course to be found by the abbot, since the monk, who might not lawfully call so much as a sheet of paper his own, could have none.

Brethren who were not capable of anything better were kept out of mischief by being set to plait straw mats; and this was adopted as one of the standing employments of winter days, and times when nothing else was to be had.

To the Cistercian monks, however, agriculture remained the favourite occupation: they regarded it as the surest means of strengthening them for the fulfilment of their vows; of overcoming the sensuality which so readily besets the idle, and also as the kind of work of all others most pleasing to God, most obviously dependent on his will, and, less than most others, on the skill of the workman. Their convents were mostly established in lonely valleys, or in the midst of forests; and many a desert has been made to "blossom like the rose" by the labour of these much-vituperated monks. In the yearly meetings of the various monasteries of this order improvements in agriculture and horticulture were made a regular subject of discussion, as well as the results of every one's experience in the introduction of the finer fruits of France and Italy, and in gardening in general. For advice and instruction on all these matters, as well as for branches for grafting, &c., the country people were always in the habit of resorting to the convent gardens.

One great difficulty in the way of the farming of the monks of Altenberg was their want of cattle; for as much of the land now converted into smiling meadows was then thick forest, or marsh, they had not sufficient nourishment for animals of draught, and could only keep pigs and sheep, which might be driven to feed in the oak or beech woods. These animals were useful for their skins: but as, in the earlier times at least, the brethren ate little meat, their fish ponds were more important to their subsistence; and to this purpose some hundreds of acres were devoted. In their gardens they raised all kinds of useful herbs and vegetables as well as fruit, and kept many bees: they drained the marshes, and turned them into fertile, arable land, and as their prosperity increased, they sent out colonies to carry into new deserts the seeds of Christianity and civilization. Peasants, whose land had been wasted and their homes burnt, in the quarrels of the nobles, sometimes fled for refuge to the monastery, and to these was usually assigned a tract of forest land to reclaim, and in return for the protection they received, it was stipulated that the land was afterwards to revert to the monastery.



In the twelfth century, at least, the Cistercians of Altenberg were no idlers. Not only the country around showed the fruits of their labour, not only did they owe their subsistence to it but the splendid abbey itself was in a great measure the work of their hands. They were the masons, the carpenters, the smiths, as well as the architects and painters. Some employed themselves in carving in wood, chiefly images of saints; others manufactured and afterwards painted the glass for the windows. Their copies of manuscripts are decorated with beautiful drawings, for which, at first they even prepared the parchment, and in spite of the prohibitions of the canonical law, they occasionally indulged in the pleasure of hunting, solely, as they alleged, for the sake of obtaining skins for their holy books. In 1114, however, a council of the church had decided, that, on account of the number of wolves and bears by which Germany was overrun, the monks might be permitted to take part in the chase of these animals; and a welcome relief must so exciting a sport have proved to the stillness and monotony of the conventual life.

Another occupation, that of the smith, had the advantage, that those employed at it were allowed to talk as much as they pleased, whilst at other kinds of work silence was enjoined. Amongst the labours of the brethren of Altenberg was also included that of weaving the stuff for their own garments, which were made from the wool of their sheep. Every monk was required to be able to make and mend what he wore himself; and it was marked as a symptom of degeneracy and relaxation of discipline, when they ceased to carry about with them needles and thread for this humble employment. Clothing was also made in convents to be bestowed upon beggars, and upper cloaks and shoes were made for sale.

Their cessation from many of these toils at a later period is not wholly to be attributed to increasing idleness; for the rise of cities, and the practise of all these crafts by the lay artisans, rendered them in a great measure superfluous.

Of all monastic duties, perhaps one of the hardest was that of absolute unconditional obedience to superiors. A

monk was no longer to have a will of his own ; and not only was he required to show the most immediate, unhesitating submission to the commands of his abbot, but each of the brethren was to be at all times ready to obey the other. The rule of Altenberg said, "Let no one do what to him may seem good or necessary, but rather let him do the will of his companion, and let each one submit himself in love to the caprices of the other." Difficult, no doubt, would be the compliance with this rule ; but not more difficult than with the command, that when one cheek is smitten we shall turn the other. Should a monk of Altenberg be commanded to do what seems too difficult, or even impossible, he may, it is added, humbly represent that the task exceeds his powers ; but should the command not be withdrawn, he is bound to try ; and if he set about it in purity and singleness of heart, God will assist him, even, it may be, with a miracle.

The punishments to be inflicted for various offences were, like everything else, laid down on the most exact scale. For trifling offences, such as idling over work, neglecting the temporal welfare of the community, or when acting as cook, breaking the dishes or spoiling the dinner, a brother was to be sharply reprovcd by the abbot before the assembled convent, or sentenced to the *excommunicatio monastica minor*, which consisted principally in exclusion from the meals of the brethren, or being sentenced to dine at the *cats' table*, and go without wine. The great monastic excommunication compelled the offender to remain apart from the rest even in the choir, and to lie prostrate across the threshold of the church at service times, so that every one going in or out must step over him. During field-labour, when the others, prayed, he had to lie stretched out with his face to the ground. In some cases the abbot possessed the power of inflicting severe corporal punishment, and even of rendering it cruel and revengeful, by the employment of what were called "scorpions," leathern thongs with iron balls or sharp pieces of metal that pierced into the flesh ; and no one dared to interfere even with a remonstrance, under pain of suffering still severer punishment himself without rescuing the offender.

Great as was the power with which the Abbot of Alten-

berg was intrusted over the community ; though he was "monarch of all he surveyed," and directed according to his good pleasure their entire affairs, internal and external, he was subjected personally to the same rules as the rest of the brethren. As the most powerful, he was required, indeed, according to theory at least, to be the most holy, and to benefit by his example not less than to guide by his authority. Besides being experienced in all spiritual matters, he was to be sober, temperate, compassionate, humble, a model of all the virtues which he prescribed to others ; and as he was to be elected by the monks themselves, from their own body, we must presume, that in the majority of cases he had at least the reputation of these virtues amongst those who had means enough of knowing each other. There could have been little possibility of bribery or deception amongst those who possessed no property, and who lived together day and night with scarcely a moment's interval ; but these as well as other rules of the order were in later times altogether disregarded.

Even at night, in the earlier ages, the monks of Altenberg were subjected to vigilant superintendence. In the dormitory the bed of the superior was raised above the rest, so that he could conveniently overlook them all ; and in the midst of the apartment a large lamp burnt through the whole night, beneath which sat a monk reading aloud from "an edifying book," that the thoughts of those who should happen to be awake might not be occupied with sinful and worldly matters. A door opened from the dormitory immediately into the church ; and as the monks, on retiring to bed, made no other change in their dress than that of laying aside the knife which they wore, they were ready to arise at the first sound of the bell for midnight prayers. It is to be observed, also, that they were not likely to be tempted to transgress this rule by the enticements of a too luxurious couch, for they had merely a wooden bedstead, a straw mat, a cushion for the head, and a blanket ; and it was required of the abbot that he should often have the beds examined, to see that no one had privately endeavoured to improve his accommodation. The monks were subsequently allowed to have separate cells ; and in a period still later and more degenerate,

melancholy to relate, they had even spacious rooms and comfortable feather beds. But behold to what dangers were the good fathers exposed, even by the first seemingly innocent indulgence!

Among the pious community of Altenberg was one Father Meinhard, who, though young, was esteemed as one of the most devout and zealous of the monks—a pattern, indeed, to the whole brotherhood. Satan, we may be sure, grudged the holy man his reputation for sanctity, and was continually endeavouring, by various artful wiles, to entangle him in the snares of sin. At last he spread a report, which, frightful as it was, the father of lies contrived, by his cunning, to get believed, that the meditations of the holy friar in his cell were not always solitary: it was whispered among the brethren that its floor “had oft by woman’s foot been trod;” and one evening in the twilight, “a female form was seen to glide” to the door of his cell, and vanish there. The monks knocked loudly, but were answered by Meinhard, that he was greatly indisposed, and begged permission of the abbot to remain within. The message was carried to the abbot, not without comments, suggesting the fearful suspicions that had been awakened in the minds of the brethren. Down came the abbot forthwith, accompanied by several pious and discreet monks, but found the door of Meinhard’s cell fast locked. He thundered at it, demanding admittance; and at length, not without delay, the door was slowly opened by Father Meinhard, appearing, indeed, sick and poorly, and seemingly alone; but the severe virtue of his visitors was not yet satisfied; they peeped about, but there were not many hiding places, and they were about to depart, when, lo, beneath a kind of press which was almost the sole furniture of the cell, they beheld—a pretty little pair of feminine shoes! Then burst the tempest of pious indignation: they tore open the press, and a beautiful girl jumped out of it, and ran laughing loudly out of the cell. The abbot and his monks were speechless with horror; but the holy Meinhard, who knew his innocence, and that this was nothing more than one of the “cantrip tricks” of his arch-enemy, straightway exorcised the shoes, when instantly they turned into two great cloven hoofs, and flew away,

emitting, as they went, most foul odours. Then, indeed, did all men perceive that the girl they had seen had been no other than Satan himself; and the sanctity of Father Meinhard shone out brighter than ever from the cloud of calumny that had concealed it. Such was one of the evil consequences resulting from a departure from the customs of that happy, but somewhat uncertain, period, denominated the "good old times."

The dining halls at the Abbey of Altenberg were two; one for the abbot, and the great refectory for the monks, where two meals were served daily, to which the brethren were summoned, by the sound of a bell, and whoever came too late had to content himself at the "cats' table." Each monk was to dine off one dish, but he was allowed to choose between two placed before him. One might be inclined to wonder, that even this much was conceded to appetite; but when we inquire of what the dishes consisted, as long as the table was furnished as the rules of the order directed, we must admit that the temptation to sensual indulgence could not have been great. The meat of quadrupeds was forbidden, under the idea that fish, as cold-blooded animals, were more conducive to temperance and soberness. Concerning poultry, there were doubts which troubled tender consciences; and about wine the rules of the order were unfortunately very ambiguous. St. Benedict had allowed a certain measure called a "*hemina*," but unluckily no one could make out how much this was. Some thought it was a weight, and not a measure, and meant a quarter of a pound, others twenty-four ounces, others were convinced it meant half a pailful. It was singular enough that there was no sort of doubt about the quantity of bread, which was a pound daily, a certain portion being subtracted for the sacrament of the Eucharist. The abbot wrote out every day the bill of fare; and the cooking was performed by the monks themselves, no one being allowed to claim exemption from this duty, which every one in turn undertook for a week. The kitchen, however, could not have been a very elaborate one, as the raw material of the dinner was, it appears, only given out one hour before the time when it was to be eaten. The cook for the week was required on Saturday evening to wash the table linen,

and the kitchen utensils ; but a certain dignity was thrown over these humble employments, by their being regarded as exercises of humility, and good, therefore, for the soul's health of the individual, as well as necessary for the bodily sustenance of the community.

Two monks were employed to cook for the Abbot and his guests, of whom there were almost always some to be entertained ; and another of the brethren, called the guest-brother, was especially appointed to wait upon them, for never were the gates of the Abbey closed upon any traveller ; and the poor and suffering were always sure of finding there shelter and alms.

Little as was in general the temptation to sensual indulgence at the table of the monks, in the early days of the Abbey, the zeal of some was not content without adopting various devices of their own for the mortification of the flesh. They would stand at their meals, or sit in an inconvenient position, or mix with their food an immoderate quantity of salt, or of something still more distasteful. Another curious contrivance for the purpose of conquering pride, was what was called by the French "manger en cochon," which was intended for the especial benefit of the novices. A large trough was brought into the refectory, and whatever came from the table, thick or thin, salt or sweet, was tumbled into it, and well stirred up, and of this delicate fare the candidate for holiness had to partake, after the fashion of the animal from whom this exercise of humility took its name. He was to crawl on the ground, namely, and put in his head.

It is hardly a matter of surprise to us degenerate moderns, especially if we happen to be what the Irishman called "stark-naked Protestants," that we very soon find, in the chronicles of the abbey, complaints of the neglect of these and other excellent rules of discipline. St. Bernard of Clairvaux complains of the increase of luxury among the monks, and of their being unfit for work after dinner. About the year 1200, we find a monk bemoaning how some of the brethren have various indulgences, whilst others "get their wine so thinned, that they might drink at it for a month without being intoxicated ;" that some of the brethren pay too much

attention to their toilette, "*curling* their beards, &c. ; but, thank God," he adds, "we do not live such solitary lives as the Carthusians. I should not like to live in paradise if I must live alone ; but I would give a dozen such companions as mine for a single friend." He then goes on, it must be owned, in a somewhat grumbling strain concerning many of the arrangements of the monastery. "When one would like to eat, one must drink ; when one would like to sleep, one must wake ; when one would rather keep silence, one must speak ("*bloeken*," that is, bleat, is the more expressive word used) ; and when one would fain speak, then one must keep silence ; and this, they say, is pleasing to God !"

A lively, sociable temper, such as seems to have belonged to this brother, must have been, in truth, a sad disqualification for piety, as the word was understood, at the Abbey of Altenberg. Silence and solemnity of deportment were, according to the rules, indispensable : no word tending to excite laughter was ever to be uttered ; and a monk was to speak always softly, and not with the full voice. All conversation concerning affairs of the world was offensive and dangerous ; and even a monk who had been on a journey was not allowed to report to his brethren of the things he had seen of the world beyond the cloister. A monk was not merely to carry humility in his heart, it was to be seen also in his outward deportment ; whether in the cloister or the church, in the garden or the field, whether he sit, or stand, or walk, his head is to be bent, his eyes cast down. "He is to regard himself as a sinner who is not worthy to lift up his eyes to heaven."

It is not difficult to see what fruit must spring from such a seed. Either the rules were entirely neglected, and thus the way opened that might lead to boundless licentiousness, or if observed, they led, in many cases, to the most deplorable stupidity, or the most pitiable excesses of self-torment, not unfrequently even to insanity and suicide. The wise rule of St. Benedict enjoins that no monk shall do more than he is commanded to do by his abbot, "for that all these desires to exceed in self-mortification arise from pride ;" but carrying out to its

legitimate consequences their principle of elevating the spirit by crucifying the flesh, the zealous and conscientious were never weary of inflicting on themselves every variety of annoyance, from the most trivial inconvenience to the acutest torture, and waged, with what success we may easily divine, a perpetual war against the ever-recurring feelings and instincts of nature. Some would wear horse-hair shirts, or wind knotted ropes tight round their bodies; others would encourage fleas, and other animals of prey; some would wear under their clothes sharp pieces of metal, that ran into them at every movement; and as the blood was regarded as the peculiar source of all sins of the senses, it was very common to be bled even to fainting, "for the love of Christ."

Sometimes the abbot would make out "mortification" tickets, which were drawn by the monks in the fashion of a lottery, and, when opened, were found to contain the prescription of certain penances, to which the drawer was then bound to subject himself.

Among the darker features of monasticism, must also not be forgotten the practice of parents devoting their children to the cloister as an atonement for their own sins. The poor infant was brought before the altar, its little hands enveloped in the drapery, and the parents then swore that they would never give the child any opportunity to break the vows; and, moreover, would bestow on the convent whatever fortune had been intended for it.

It is possible that in those fierce wild ages this may sometimes have been done, especially in the case of female children, out of regard for their safety. "For my daughters, they shall be praying nuns, not weeping queens," was a sentiment that might have been echoed by many; but in most instances this sacrifice was offered as an easy penance for the transgressions of the parents. The rules of the Cistercian order commanded that children so received should be treated with great mildness; and in some cases the thoughts and affections of the young novice grew up and twined themselves so completely round the cloister, that he had no hope or wish connected with the world beyond. But there were others where



they made desperate resistance, committed suicide, or, succeeding in making their escape, became robbers and murderers; for as none but the outcasts of society would receive them, they had often no other resource. Papal bulls and decrees of councils, indeed, frequently forbade the reception into convents of persons of immature age; but there appears to be no point concerning which they were at different times more at variance with themselves.

The number of monks in the abbey of Altenberg varied from time to time. In less than a century after its foundation there were 107 monks, three novices, and 138 *fratres sinistri*, mostly men of high rank who had retired to the cloister to prepare themselves for a future state, in what the opinion of the age regarded as the most suitable place for such a work. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the number was much greater. The vast riches of the abbey were partly the produce of the industry of the monks, partly of pious endowments, and of the many privileges of religious houses; and partly from the sale of relics, which, even though they had often really been bought at high prices, afforded, nevertheless, the material of a decidedly profitable trade. As the convent's lands could be free from all vexatious burdens, their produce could be sold on terms advantageous to the purchaser, yet leave a sufficient profit; and the Crusades, it is well known, threw into the hands of the monks many fine estates, for which their noble owners were in haste to obtain a price in ready money, that scarcely any one else was in a condition to advance.

The monasteries had often, indeed, to furnish large contributions to Rome, for which they were an exhaustless mine of wealth; and they suffered not a little from depredators, especially of the robber knights, who used to declare that it was a good work to take from the fat monks the riches that served only to withdraw them from the "contemplation of heavenly things." But both these drains were insignificant compared with the abundance of their sources of wealth.

Turning over the long register of the abbots and mitred prelates of Altenberg, in the chronicles of the convent, we obtain occasional glimpses into the character

of those long-buried ages. Count Eberhard, the founder, we find, after a few years, laid down his dignity of abbot of St. Georgesburg, in Thuringia, and came to pass the remainder of his days in the abbey as a simple monk. His brother Adolph, and many other nobles, followed his example, and brought with them valuable endowments to the convent ; but "led there humble and pious lives." In the reign of the abbot Bodo, from 1173 to 1181, the abbey suffered great loss from the depredations of robber knights and nobles, especially of a certain Count of Arensberg, who plundered and laid waste many farms which belonged to it. In the next reign the complaint is repeated, and we hear also, as well, of the inroads of wild races from Bohemia ; but these losses were amply compensated by the rich gifts in money and land which were made during the same period. It was this abbot Goswin, too, who was lucky enough to make the grand acquisition of the before-mentioned bones of the eleven thousand virgins. In the reign of the abbot Rishold, beginning in 1203, the convent was much enriched by estates sold and pledged for small sums by knights going to the Crusades ; and the preaching against the heretical sects that sprung up at this time in Italy and the south of France, also tended to fill the coffers of the abbey. In 1212, it seems, the abbot, with many other prelates, and the general of the Cistercian order, took the field in person against the Albigenses. An earthquake, a comet, and many extraordinary appearances in the heavens, are noted shortly after, which are considered to portend the approach of the last day, and by the Jews the coming of their Messiah ; but when these predictions are not verified, it is found that the marvels observed are occasioned by the great wickedness of the time. The most remarkable incident occurring in the next reign was the murder of St. Engelbert, archbishop of Cologne, the sovereign of the country, who had latterly resided at Altenberg, by Count Frederick of the Isenburg. The body was laid out in state at the abbey, seen by great numbers of people, and performed many miracles ; afterwards it was, by order of the next archbishop, carried to Nurnberg, and laid before the states of the

empire there assembled ; and then, over the remains of the murdered saint, the archbishop made a solemn speech, in which he proclaimed the virtues of the departed, and the miracles worked by him, after death, and called for vengeance on the murderer. The next abbot, Bruno, was so fortunate as to obtain for the community many capital bargains of relics, from poor knights returning from the Crusades, who were right glad to obtain hard cash for holy treasures of this kind, which they had collected in their wanderings in Asia and Africa. It is mentioned with regret, however, that many deceptions were practised upon the pious in such matters ; and "this may account for the surprising circumstance, that the same relic is often found in many different places." Altenberg, besides many purchases, obtained also, by gift, great quantities of these precious possessions. In the year 1250, under abbot Gieselber, the great work was the completion of the church, to which the whole country, the archbishop, and the neighbouring princes, the cities, and even the lowest of the people joyfully contributed ; and in the course of ten years the grand choir was finished, as well as the sacristy and dormitory. The principal difficulty was in the transport of the building materials ; for the foundations and some of the outer works, they could be got from the ruins of the castle of Berg, but the columns, and the large masses of stone, had to be brought down the Rhine from the quarries of Konigswinter to Muhlheim, and thence on waggons over a very rough country to the valley of the Dhun. For this reason it was found expedient to be more sparing in the stone ornaments of the exterior of the church than in many edifices of the kind, which lay nearer to the quarries. Abbot Otto, in 1277, bought for the abbey a large vineyard at Rolandwerth, and also founded a convent of Cistercian nuns, "on the tile field outside the walls of Cologne." with the assistance of one Bruno Hardfist, a patrician of that city.

The year 1287 brought bad harvests and great scarcity ; and in the winter, when the cold was so severe that the Rhine was frozen over, the Archbishop Siegfried of Cologne came across the ice at the head of a great army,

and robbed, and murdered, and wasted with fire all the country round, so that great numbers of houseless wanderers perished of cold and hunger. The abbey of Altenberg received on this occasion many of the poor fugitives, and gave alms to hundreds more, maintaining them "till the return of spring enabled them to take revenge on their cruel enemies." In the feud with the archbishop, the Berg people were finally victorious, and came home laden with booty, of which the abbey received a fair portion. The succeeding abbot finished the church, and had its interior tastefully decorated with the bones and skulls of the holy eleven thousand. He also built several new altars, and had the library enriched with several valuable MSS., purchased for very large sums. In 1324, came, "by the malice of Satan," the great flood already mentioned, and then, passing over many reigns, in which the principal events seem to have been the continual acquisition of new lands (sometimes now on the left bank of the Rhine), and the payment of debts incurred for the buildings, we come, in 1348, to the visitation of the terrible malady called the "Black Death," during which, as usual, the day of judgment was declared to be close at hand. For thirty-two years, down to 1420, the mitre was worn by Johann Von Hauenberg, under whom the convent flourished greatly; and the abbot obtained great fame by the establishment of a popular festival, that continued to be celebrated till the abolition of the abbey; and in which the inhabitants of eighteen villages came every year in procession to Altenberg, with banners and crucifixes, and brought many gifts to its shrines. For this institution, he was honoured with the particular approbation of the Holy See, and the bestowal of several important indulgences. In this reign died the Bishop Wichbold of Culm, who had laid down his episcopal dignity and become a monk of Altenberg, presenting to it at the same time the house he had inherited from his fathers, "in St. John's Street, in Cologne," afterwards enlarged and fitted up as an asylum for the brethren in war-time; and also his whole property, which was employed for the enlargement and beautification of the abbey church. At his death, he left a certain sum to be

expended in an extra portion of wine to the brethren for the seven days before Christmas, "that his companions might to the end of time have a pleasant remembrance of him." In this reign, forced contributions were levied on the abbey, for carrying on the feuds of the dukes William and Adolph of Berg; and the succeeding one brought only increase of loans, and of debts, which unhappily, it appears, were in some measure occasioned by the expenses of the community, for the brethren did not now live in so frugal a manner as formerly. From this time, there are frequent complaints of the neglect of the rules of the Order, and of the abbey declining in its reputation for sanctity, especially under one Abbot Johann, a baron of Schlebusch, who was at length formally deposed, as being more "addicted to the world than to religion." Oddly enough, considering that his defective morals had been the cause of his deposition, he was appointed afterwards to be the confessor of a convent of nuns,—an office which he held to the satisfaction of all parties "for thirty years, until his blessed end." The abbey of Altenberg, in the mean time, had undergone a reform; and the present abbot finding that, on account of the great wealth of the abbey, the manual labour once performed by the monks had been gradually discontinued, endeavoured to supply its place by intellectual toil; increased the library; and being a very learned man, became himself the instructor of the monks in many branches of knowledge.

The period of the Reformation endangered the stability of the abbey of Altenberg, as of so many other convents; the halo of sanctity once surrounding it had faded away; the influx of printed books had destroyed the monopoly of spiritual culture once enjoyed by the religious establishments; a race of learned men had sprung up, who derived their learning from extra ecclesiastical sources; and with the intellectual superiority of the church, its whole spiritual influence was fast declining. They who had been looked on as the depositories and promoters of wisdom and knowledge, were now very generally regarded as little better than conservators of superstition and stupid prejudice. Instead of diffusing light, they now, it was thought, served rather to "ray out darkness;" and when

they had ceased to be spiritual guides, they seemed to have little other business in the world than to consume vast revenues; and in return for all the advantages they enjoyed, did not even bear any part in the burdens of the state. The cities, too, in the prosperity which, in spite of all hinderances, had rewarded their skill, industry, and enterprise, had become bold enough to apply the standard of sound human intelligence to all questions that came before them, and treated with contemptuous indifference the literature of the monks, and their pretensions to superior sanctity. The princes and nobles, impoverished by their lavish expenditure and increasing luxury, were beginning to cast covetous glances at the riches of the clergy; and encouraged the prevailing inclination to look grudgingly on them as a splendidly-paid class of do-nothings. The monks, who professed to be dead to the world, it was thought were dead only to its duties, and alive enough for its enjoyments. In Altenberg, many of the old stern rules of discipline had come to be spoken of as ancient and venerable, but obsolete customs; the monks, as we have seen, no longer toiled to supply their own wants or those of the poor; they gave alms, indeed, from their superfluity; but this careless almsgiving was very different from the active charity of former days,—the mercy “that blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.” In the reign of the Abbot Winand, which began in 1546, the convulsions occasioned by the violent religious dissensions of the time had thrown the affairs of the abbey into great disorder; and the monks were rambling about the country, they said, as faithful shepherds’ dogs, to bark the stray sheep back into the fold; but many of the laity declared that they had more to fear from the dogs than from the wolves. In the disastrous period of the Thirty Years’ War, Altenberg had much to suffer from the marchings and quarterings of troops, to which it was particularly liable, from the high road from Cologne, through Westphalia to Berlin, lying at no great distance from it; and there being scarcely any accommodation to be met with in the country for many miles round, except what the abbey could afford. In May of the year 1628, a division of the Austrian army ravaged the whole country,

committing the greatest outrages, wounding, and even killing many of the inhabitants. The following year, the community of Altenberg was kept in constant fear by the advance of William of Nassau and his Dutchmen ; and at Christmas, a flying corps really appeared, and plundered the abbey of whatever it could lay hands on. In 1630, came the "Beggars," as they were called, and then again the Austrians, who cleared off all the produce of the land, and left the farms to go to ruin. Whether these unwelcome visitors were called friends or foes made little difference ; their path was, in either case, marked equally with destruction. In 1632, the Swedes advanced into the country, and the monks, who had now little left wherewith to satisfy their demands, fled to their asylum in Cologne. The abbey on this occasion was regularly ransacked, and everything moveable carried away or destroyed : the great silver lamp that hung over the tomb of several princes, whose remains were deposited there ; and the silver chest for relics became the booty of the rude soldiery, who thought proper to manifest also their hatred to Popery, by the vilest desecration of the altars, the relics, and even of the books ; and the abbot had, finally, to send them a large sum of money from Cologne, that they might not tear down the very walls. The chronicles of the convent are filled with complaints of the sufferings of the country people, as well as of the monks. All farming operations were stopped, and the peasantry driven to maintain themselves by robbery. Trade and industry of every kind was at a stand-still ; the country was devoured by hordes of various denominations, who destroyed what they could not consume, trampled down the corn where it was just springing up, or cut it green to feed their horses ; and provisions of all sorts became so scarce, that the people were almost dying of hunger : if anything green appeared on the fields, it was only weeds, and even these, and other things unfit for food, they were compelled to eat. The tempest at length passed over ; but many, many years of peace were required, to heal but partially the wounds inflicted during this terrible time. The vast resources of the abbey enabled it, however, finally to meet all the demands made

upon it ; and even to rise once more to a high degree of prosperity. In the Austrian war of succession, in the next century, it was again burdened with the maintenance of troops for three whole years ; and in the following Seven years' war we find mention of the arrival of a body of Prussian hussars, who came of course to plunder the abbey. The monks had shut the gates, but they were violently broken in, and the cloisters became a scene of boundless riot. The larder, store rooms, and cellars were emptied, and the very horses of the soldiers stood up to their bellies in oats, and drank wine out of pails, while the officers in command called the monks together, to demand the payment of a heavy fine. This was refused ; and some of the monks were immediately seized, bound fast, and carried away as hostages. Eventually, the abbey had to pay five hundred dollars to obtain their release. In the course of the war, scenes of this kind were frequently repeated, but the convent sustained other injuries, which were greater and more incurable still. The effect of a constant association with a licentious and brutal soldiery could not but be injurious to these simple and ignorant recluses, and the years of peace, which covered the earth again with smiling harvests, never seem to have repaired the moral devastation thus occasioned ; for it is one of the evils of conventual life, even in its purity, that it tends to reduce the mind to a childlike condition, in which it is peculiarly susceptible of contamination from evil example.

During the eighteenth century, the number of the monks had greatly declined, but that of their attendants had increased in more than equal proportion. We hear of huntsmen, fishermen, cooks, coachmen, lackeys of various denominations. The monks now also frequently found that a change of air was absolutely necessary to their health, and obtained permission to visit baths, and watering places : the abbey was almost perpetually crowded with guests of distinction, and renowned for its costly wines, and delicate fare. The abbots lived like princes, sometimes at the abbey, but oftener at Cologne. Towards the end of this century, there was a general conviction, even in the Catholic countries of Germany, that the num-



ber of convents was too great, and the suppression of many was consequently determined on. In 1803, the abbey of Altenberg, with all its possessions, was declared to be the property of the Bavarian Government, to be applied to state purposes; and ultimately the magnificent buildings, with the gardens and pleasure grounds, as well as seven hundred acres of its arable and meadow lands, and its extensive woods and waters, were bought by a Cologne wine merchant for rather less than 27,000 dollars. The splendid movables had all been previously carried off. The church was of course excepted from the bargain, and continued to be used for divine service; but many of its beautiful antiquities were from time to time "conveyed" by various official personages; and from the abbey the gorgeous glass windows, and similarly splendid relics of its past glories, were remorselessly torn down, and carried away to be sold.

It is impossible to dwell without regret on this scene of spoliation; it is a melancholy spectacle, as decay and dissolution always are to us short-sighted mortals, who want the strength of vision and of faith, "the evidence of things unseen," which might enable us to look beyond it to the better things that the bounty of Providence has sooner or later in store for us, when it destroys the outward form of what was once beautiful and holy, but which is so no longer when the spirit once enshrined within it has fled.

The abbey, with the wonders of art, and skill, and industry, which it contained, had been but the material expression of the piety, the imagination, the energy, and self-sacrifice of a former age; but these had all past away: the task of the monks was done; their use and meaning was for a different age. Those who still wore the habit were little better than a set of idle and rather stupid gentlemen, who lived a "fat, careless life," and spent their time chiefly, not like the holy men of old in labour and prayer, and works of mercy or of self-mortification, but "*O tempora ! O mores !*" in playing at skittles and reading the newspapers !

## CHAPTER X.

## THE MASTERS OF PRUSSIA.

IN some old quarter of most of the great towns of Germany is to be seen an extensive building of antique and rather gloomy appearance, more or less dilapidated, but bearing evident traces of former magnificence, and obviously not originally destined to the miscellaneous purposes to which it is at present applied. Sometimes conspicuous over the gateway, sometimes not discoverable till after closer inspection, appears a white shield with a black cross. These are among the few remaining memorials of that once mighty order of monkish warriors, the Teutonic Knights; an order which not only, like their contemporaries the Templars and the Knights of St. John, filled for hundreds of years a conspicuous place at once in the annals of war and of religion, but established one of the most enlightened states of the middle ages, exercised sovereign authority over millions of men, and ruled an extensive country, which was indebted solely to them for its prosperity and civilisation, perhaps for its very existence among European nations. "Prussia, under the dominion of the Teutonic Knights," says a modern historian, "presents a phenomenon unique in history. In spirit and form their administration resembles nothing that we meet with in all that wide domain." As a political experiment, therefore, as an example of one among the many possible forms in which human society may be kept together, and its objects more or less attained, as an association united by peculiar ties, and for peculiar purposes, it cannot but be worthy of attention; but there is another point of view in which these most singular institutions, the monastic military orders, become objects of still higher interest. However chimerical might be in our eyes the purposes they had in view, however preposterous the means adopted for their attainment, we cannot refuse our admiration and respect to this noble effort to reach the

highest ideal of virtue which it was possible for that age, or perhaps for any age, to form—the union of the patience, the humility, the gentleness, and self-denial of a perfect monk, with the ardent, chivalrous spirit, the discipline, the dauntless daring of a perfect soldier.

“Who can be otherwise than moved when he sees these monkish knights, after performing prodigies of valour, exhausted by the combat with the infidels, returning home from the fatigues of a bloody day, instead of crowning their victorious brows with the well-earned laurel, without a murmur; exchanging their chivalrous duties for the humble offices of a nurse; these lions in the fight exhibiting by the bed-side of the sick, virtues which darken by their radiance all the glory of their heroic deeds; when we see the hand which a few hours before had wielded the sword for Christendom, and guarded the trembling pilgrim unharmed through hosts of the enemy, now offering the food and performing the most menial office for a, perhaps, loathsome sufferer—‘for God’s sake.’”\*

Could we, could any, ever hope for better, than, with the necessary differences of outward form—to “go and do likewise?” Can humanity be seen under any higher aspect. It may be said, perhaps, this was not the general character of all who took these vows, and, in after ages, when the Order had become great, flourishing, and wealthy, high in fame and worldly honour, its character had no doubt become greatly changed; but even long after this period the life of each individual member was one of hardship, privation, and peril, and hundreds had laid down their lives in the cause before even the foundation of that mighty edifice was laid. Like almost all that has been really great in the world, the commencement of this institution was small and humble. History has forgotten to record even the name of the founder; for it was not the Empress Helena, as has been sometimes stated, but some unknown German, probably a citizen of Bremen, living with his wife in the then Christian city of Jerusalem, who, about the year 1128, being struck by the miserable condition of many of the poor pilgrims, his

\* Schiller's Preface to the History of the Knights of Malta.

countrymen, built from his own means a small house for their reception. Partly from national jealousy, and partly because their language was not understood, they had been it seems neglected by the other charitable orders, and many of them were perishing from fatigue, hunger, and

The house was soon filled with poor sufferers; and when the attention they demanded exceeded the powers of the founder and his wife, who were both personally and sedulously engaged in the duty, other pious men were found among the German knights, who were willing to add to the merit of their feats of arms, and their devotions at the Holy Sepulchre, that of works of charity and mercy, and who joined them in the Christian duty of ministering to their unfortunate countrymen. Money, also, though it was not a very plentiful article with them, they gave, when it was needed; and the little society kept together and prospered without the aid of public dinners or newspaper paragraphs. The attention of the Patriarch of Jerusalem was at length called to the infant institution, in order that some further provision might be made for the spiritual wants of the increasing number of patients; and he accordingly built a chapel near it for their use, and, moreover, did it the favour to place it under the especial protection of the Virgin Mary—a thing that looked civil, and was not expensive. Thenceforward, therefore, those who did duty in the hospital were known as the brothers of St. Mary; and it was thought expedient that the character of the new society should be assimilated to that of the already existing Orders of the Templars and the Knights of St. John. His holiness the pope also was now pleased to interfere in the business, and ordered that the Grand Master of the latter should assume the superintendence of the new brotherhood. For a long time, however, the resources of the house were extremely limited, scarcely sufficient to meet the expenses incurred in the care of the sick. But the spirit of the age was favourable to such institutions; and after a while persons were found willing to devote to it not merely an annual donation, but their “lives and fortunes” in good earnest, humbly hoping, no doubt, to find in it also their own sal-

vation ; which hope, according to some superfine theorists of modern times, may entitle us to reduce their merit in it to zero. But this refinement in morals was unknown to so barbarous an age as well as to the first preachers of the Gospel.

A series of years passed, in which history has found little to say concerning the brothers of St. Mary, except that they now generally adopted the rule of life of St. Augustine, and distinguished themselves by wearing a white mantle with a black cross upon it. Acts of mercy and charity daily performed by them, raising the dying head, holding drink to the fevered lip, soothing the parting soul ; such things as these are not among the class of facts which history has been accustomed to record ; and the achievements of the brothers in their knightly character, when in times of danger they seized the sword to defend the holy soil where they had laid up such a treasure of good works, were generally performed in company with the two other orders of monastic knights, and are not now to be distinguished from theirs. That the gallant brothers of St. Mary had a reputation for sanctity appears probable from the fact that, in 1163, Sophia, the widow of the Count of Holland, who died in her third pilgrimage to Jerusalem had particularly desired to be buried within the chapel of the hospital ; and it was done accordingly, "*sepulta est in Hospitali Teutonorum.*"

The Christian kingdom of Jerusalem had at this time fallen into deplorable disorder and demoralisation. A sickly boy of thirteen, Baldwin X., had been chosen king, and the nobles about him were engaged in constant struggles for the administration of the government, of which of course he was totally incapable. But there were deeper evils even than those occasioned by faction and violence. The old sincere devotion to the soil had almost wholly died away ; the holy sepulchre had become to many a mere heap of stones, and the electric force of enthusiasm which had held the Christians together had passed away. A dissolute state of morals followed, as a matter of course : the patriarch of Jerusalem was living a life of open and shameless profligacy with the wife of a grocer of Naples ; and the Templars were accused in

public assemblies of the church of the most atrocious crimes ; all seemed rushing down to ruin.

Such a society as this could be in no condition to maintain itself against an enemy so wise and energetic as Saladin: the Christian army suffered a terrible and disgraceful defeat, and the holy city fell again into his hands. From his order that all who bore the Christian name should immediately quit its walls, the brotherhood of St. Mary was expressly excepted ; for it was not in the nature of the noble foe to exhibit any vindictive feeling to an association whose chief object it was to solace human misery ; they were expressly permitted to remain at Jerusalem as long as they had any patients who required their care. Of those of the brothers who had occupied themselves mostly with the warlike duties of their profession, the greater part had fallen in the above-mentioned battle of Hittin.

A cry of lamentation arose throughout Europe at the news of the fall of Jerusalem : a new crusade was preached, and the Emperor Frederick I. took up the cross, to devote the evening of his days to the service of his Lord. Twenty thousand knights, and an almost countless hordes of ecclesiastics, citizens and people of all classes, set out on foot to recover possession of the holy city, led by the great majority of the princes, counts, and bishops of Germany. The terrible sufferings of this host are well known. The aged emperor lost his life in a small river in Armenia ; and war, famine, and pestilence, had fearfully thinned their ranks, when at length, under the guidance of the Duke of Swabia, they joined, before Acre, the Christian armies from France, England, and Italy.

A great scarcity of provisions had already existed, which of course the arrival of this new body of pilgrims tended to increase. Saladin, fully aware of the condition of his invaders, avoided coming to a decisive battle, where their numbers might have availed, and sought only to cut off their supplies. The famine became so dreadful, that not only horseflesh, grass, and roots, but things still more revolting, were devoured by the sufferers, and disease followed as a natural consequence. The German pilgrims suffered most of all from having arrived in so enfeebled and ex-

hausted a condition : many of them lay perishing on the sands of the sea-shore without hope of food or succour. In this condition they were found by some merchants of the Hanseatic League, citizens of Bremen and Lubeck, who immediately took measures for their relief : and it is mentioned that they even cut up the sails of their ships to make tents wherein to shelter their unfortunate countrymen. The small remnant of the Teutonic brethren also now arrived from Jerusalem, and associated themselves with these good Samaritans in this work of charity ; and in order to prevent the entire dissolution of the society, Duke Frederick now first conceived the idea of raising it into a knightly order, and bestowing on it the same honours and privileges as the two elder brotherhoods of the Templars and Hospitallers.

Assembling in council the masters of these orders, the princes and bishops of Germany who had accompanied him, and the king and patriarch of Jerusalem, he declared his purpose of affording his countrymen the advantage already possessed by other nations, of an association, in which pilgrims of noble rank, who wished to renounce the world, might publicly devote themselves to the protection of the Holy Land and to works of piety and mercy.

Messages were despatched to the Pope (Clement III.) and the Emperor (Henry VI.), from both of whom gracious answers were received. The former took the new order under the especial protection of St. Peter ; the latter granted to the Duke and the King of Jerusalem the power of conferring the honour of knighthood on all who should enter it ; and further, also, the liberty of granting the same power to the knights themselves. Duke Frederick himself did not live to receive the gracious letters of the spiritual and temporal sovereigns, for he had fallen a victim to the pestilence raging in the Christian camp ; but the King of Jerusalem and the German princes met together, and forty pilgrims of noble birth, and pious and blameless lives, immediately presented themselves to become members of the Order. After receiving knighthood they knelt humbly before the Patriarch and the Bishops, who bestowed on them a solemn blessing, invested them with the white mantle marked with a black cross, which

was now adopted as the habit of the order, and exhorted them to be strict in the performance of their duties, as warriors of God and his church, as protectors of widows and orphans, and helpers of sick and suffering humanity.

Henry Walpot, by some said to be a simple citizen of Bremen, by others a knight from the Rhine country, but, as both agree, equally renowned for valour and Christian benevolence, was appointed the first Master of the order. Master Henry administered most conscientiously the contributions that came to him from all sides, was strict in his observance of the rules of the institution, and skilfully avoided becoming entangled in the disputes and quarrels that were now daily breaking out among the crusaders. Acre was at length conquered : and so many sick and wounded men were thrown on the care of the Teutonic knights, that they could often, it is said, not find room to sit down to table, or to hang up their armour.

The next master was a knight of eighty years of age, also of Bremen, who could now no longer perform feats of arms, but who devoted himself so much the more zealously to the other branch of his duty, and spent almost all his time in the hospital.

The rules of the Teutonic order were, it appears, not written as usual in Latin, for the knights were no scholars, but in their rough native German, and every knight was required to furnish himself with a copy. Of these, the vows of celibacy, obedience, and poverty, form, of course, the foundation ; but to the latter, some qualification is admitted, " on account of the expenses of the hospital and of knighthood ;" but lands, vineyards, fields, or other property, can be held only in the name of the order. Then follow very numerous instructions respecting prayer, fasting, sleep, dress, and food. A brother may not possess more than two shirts, two pairs of trousers, one black robe, and the white mantle with the black cross before mentioned ; his shoes must be of the coarsest kind, without any ornament or peaked toes, chains, or high heels ; his bed is to be a sack of straw ; and he must have no gold and silver, except on his weapons, and no other fur than sheep or goat's skin ; his sleeves are to be of a proper width, " not too wide, and not too narrow," and in the cutting of



his hair and beard he is also to preserve the same "*juste milieu*." All the arrangements for the houses of the order are to be on the simplest and rudest scale ; but every one is to be provided with at least one "fair white linen cloth with the black cross upon it," for the administering of the sacrament of the Eucharist.

On Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, the brethren are to eat well of meat, and on the other days, of milk, and eggs : Friday is to be a fast day ; but acts of extraordinary abstinence are forbidden, probably in consideration of the necessity of preserving the bodily strength necessary for military duties. At dinner, that the hunger and thirst after righteousness may be satisfied as well as the more ignoble appetite, a reader is appointed to entertain the knights with some pious book ; and it is also provided, that they are to eat two and two together out of the same dish. The whole loaves left are to be preserved, the broken ones given to the poor, to whom also belonged of right the tenth of all the bread baked in every house of the Order. A portion four times as great as that of any other knight is to be allowed to the Master, in order, that he may have something to bestow on those who are in penance, or others, according to his pleasure. It is provided also, that the table kept in the infirmary shall be better than the ordinary one, and no salt meat, hard beans, or other things difficult of digestion, be sent to it. All the brothers who are in health are to sleep in one dormitory, where a light is to be kept burning, and all idle talking and jesting is to be discouraged. In horses, weapons, and all matters appertaining to chivalry, the knights are enjoined to modesty and sobriety : there is to be no gold or silver on shield or bridle ; and a knight is not to have more than two horses, unless the Master or dignitaries, who are allowed three. Hunting is forbidden, except of wolves, bears, lions, or other mischievous beasts, but shooting at a mark is permitted for the sake of practice. Finally, the brethren are enjoined to avoid all calling of names, and to live so that all beholding them may exclaim, "Behold how goodly a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !" Tournaments and knightly banquets are discouraged, as tending to the service of the devil ; and indeed the order generally

had their hands too full of real warfare to make it likely that they would have found much attraction in these mimic contests.

No Teutonic knight is even to talk of women, far less to kiss any, though it were his sister or his mother, and every novice, wishing to become a member of the Order, must declare that he is of free German birth, without any disease or bodily defect, without a wife, or connexion with any other order, and also that he is not in debt: if he should be found to have sworn falsely, with respect to any of these things, he is liable to expulsion.

The requisitions made of these valiant knights, with respect to learning, are certainly not exorbitant. Six weeks are allowed for getting by heart the Creed and the Paternoster; and if the warrior should prove so great a dunce that he is not perfect even at the end of that time, he must do penance for three days, and then he may claim six weeks more, but should he even then have failed to master his lesson, he is to be expelled as incorrigible.

We look further down the gulf of time for about a hundred years from the day when that unknown pious German, dwelling in Jerusalem, stretched forth his hand to the good work, and we find no longer a few pilgrims walking humbly with their God, ministering in silence and obscurity beside the couch of pain forsaken of all but them, but we see a numerous and powerful body renowned all over Europe, high in favour with emperors and popes, and having lands and houses not only in Germany, but in Italy and Sicily, Spain and Portugal. At the head of the order stands the Master, sometimes called the High Master; for on account of the extent of territory, there are now many others—land masters who exercise supreme command over the order in the various countries of Europe; land commanders for single provinces; and house commanders for each convent or house of the order, besides a host of subordinate officers and serving brothers, squires, and men-at-arms, attendants and artisans of various classes, and half-brothers, received from charity, and distinguished by wearing half a cross. The “fair white linen cloth,” with a simple black cross upon

it, has become satin embroidered with silver, and sometimes enriched with brilliants; the King of Jerusalem has added to the arms of the order his golden cross; the emperor has adorned them with the imperial eagle; St. Louis has planted upon their standard his four lilies, and the pope has bestowed on the master a costly ring of diamonds and rubies—a ring now in possession of the Emperor of Austria, who still bears the title "*rex et præterea nihil*," of High Master of the Teutonic Order.

As yet, with all this worldly distinction, there is, however, no talk of corruption of morals; and under the auspices of Hermann de Salza, the High Master, the order is rapidly rising to a still higher pinnacle of glory.

Of this Hermann de Salza we hear nothing but what is admirable; even to this distant age he shines forth as a hero, a statesman, in private life almost a saint;—one of those beautiful and heroic figures that will bear to be looked at on every side, before which his contemporaries seem to rejoice to prostrate themselves in boundless admiration and love, and which even modern historians cannot speak of without enthusiasm. This Master had successfully exercised the delicate and difficult office of mediator and arbiter in the disputes of the emperor and the pope; and in acknowledgment of his services many valuable privileges had been conferred by both upon the order. The Teutonic knights were to be free from all tolls on roads, rivers, or bridges; to have, wherever they came, wood, grass, and water free; to pay no chancery tax; to be allowed to hold imperial fiefs, &c. The favours conferred by the pope were mostly of a spiritual kind, such as he had to give, but which had then a real value: and amongst these we may count a piece of the wood of the true cross, a present that occasioned infinite rejoicing. Noble after noble now assumed the insignia of the order as a high and honourable distinction, and making over to it also "*pro remedio animæ*," his broad lands, passed on to perish in the burning wastes of Syria, in the almost forlorn hope of recovering possession of that holy ground on which the Saviour's foot had trodden. The two brothers, Henry and Frederick, Counts of Hohenlohe, by mutual

consent, on their departure for Palestine, alienated some of their most valuable estates, "*nudi nudum Christum sequi cupientes.*"

## CHAPTER XI.

### PRUSSIA IN THE OLD TIME.

It was after the fall of Damietta, when the ardour for the Eastern crusades was visibly on the decline, that the Teutonic knights found themselves called on to assist in repelling the attacks of the wild heathen Prussians, who had long been committing terrible ravages on the border, and were now breaking into the north-eastern frontier of Christendom. Over the early history of Prussia, over its very geographical existence, dark clouds of obscurity rest, and only now and then comes a wandering voice giving hints of its whereabouts in a vague and uncertain manner. Much learning has been expended, it is said, by patriotic Prussians, to show that their country is mentioned, not only in Homer, but in the books of Moses; and attempts have been even made to plant the garden of Eden on the shores of the Baltic; but the first authentic fact discoverable concerning it is the appearance of a splendid substance of a rich yellow colour, eagerly welcomed by the luxurious citizens of Rome as a new article of ornament. It had found its way to the shores of the Danube and the Adriatic, through the hands of many intermediate barbarous nations, from a people said to dwell on the shores of some unknown northern sea. Before this time there had been nothing but fables or wild hints, that might be either faint outlines of distant objects, or mere passing resemblances of objects in the cloudy realms of fancy.

In the reign of Nero, a Roman knight was despatched to find out this people; and after journeying through many strange lands, reached at length the native country of the costly production he was in search of. No record

was kept of his journey; but about a year afterwards Rome was astonished at the magnificent display of amber at one of the combats of the Coliseum. The weapons of the combatants, the litter on which the wounded were carried away, every article appertaining to the festival, was richly decorated with it, and admiration was especially excited by one piece, which, it is said, did not weigh less than ten pounds.

It appears that Prussia was at one time covered with the waters of the Baltic Sea; that the soil is wholly formed by deposits from the great rivers flowing through it; that where now cities flourish, and yellow harvests wave, the monsters of the deep once rolled their slimy bulk, and the whole was one wide weltering waste. Numerous remains of marine productions are found all over the country, even on the highest lands, and sometimes, also, these memorials of a once animated watery world are found at a great depth below the soil, affording proof of its having been formed by repeated depositions. Great masses of rock are seen, which, as there is no living rock in the country, bear witness to the rush of some mighty flood. The northern districts of Prussia present in general a fine and fertile soil, the southern great sandy wastes of many miles in extent; a difference which is accounted for on the supposition that, as the great rivers flowed on towards the Baltic, the heavy stony particles were first deposited, and the finer and softer material as the streams continued their course towards the sea. No groups of mountains, no smiling valleys, give variety to the landscape; its form is that of one great level, monotonous plain.

What period of time may have been required for the formation of the country by these means cannot well be ascertained, but it is a process still going on, in the low lands at the mouth of the Vistula, on some districts of the Frisch and Curian Haffs, and some other parts of the Baltic shore, where not a single stone is to be found that has not been brought by human hands. Animals, plants, and trees of different species from any now existing appear to have been produced in the ages when it first arose from the flood, and then probably bloomed the tree

from which dripped the rich resin of the amber, in whose thick juice some of the insects with which the air was filled became imprisoned.

The first account of the inhabitants seem to have been that given by the well-known English mariner Wulfstan, who made a voyage to the further shores of the Baltic, returned home in safety, and gave our King Alfred a description of the countries he had visited. The object of his journey was, however, not to write an account of his travels, but to visit a place somewhere on the eastern coast of the Baltic, where the Northmen carried on a barter trade with the wild tribes of Prussia. Amber was of course the chief article obtained from them, as, though no longer, as in ancient Rome, highly prized as a personal decoration, it was much used in the services of the church; furs and fish were also procured from the Prussians; and it is supposed that they, in exchange, received from the Northmen the rings, bracelets, and other decorations found in many of the ancient tombs of Prussia.

Wulfstan, after giving a very exact description of the various waters, and of the articles of trade, goes on to say.—“The Eastland is very large, and there are in it many castles, and in every castle there is a king, also there is much honey and fish, and the poor and the slaves drink mead, but the kings and the richest men drink mare’s milk, and there is much quarrelling among them. Beer is not brewed in the Eastland.” The mare’s milk was, doubtless, the fermented liquor called kumys, still in use among the Tatar nations; for Wulfstan seems immediately on mentioning it to have been reminded of the quarrels that took place among those who drank it. The mead, the drink of the common people, was of a soberer quality. There were several distinctions of rank among them, and the lowest, in which were placed the prisoners of war, was in a state of complete slavery. The kings were merely chiefs in war; for associated with each in his authority was a mysterious personage called a Greeve, who exercised the functions of priest and legislator, but dwelt unseen in the mysterious depths of solemn woods, where he listened to the voices of the gods, where

no stranger was ever permitted to approach him, and where he was rarely seen even by his countrymen.

"In the neighbourhood of the famous Scandinavian temple at Upsala, in Sweden," says Adam of Bremen, "stands a mighty tree extending its branches far and wide, which in summer and winter is always green, and whose species none can tell. In such a tree the gods had their abode in more than one spot in Prussia: and these sacred trees were still standing in the thirteenth century: their constant verdure was said to be maintained by the blood of the numerous victims slaughtered beneath their leafy boughs. Within the precincts of the sacred grove no tree was allowed to be cut, no leaf stirred, no withered branch removed, its very name signified the 'place of silence.'"

On the main trunk of the holy tree, which formed its innermost sanctuary, were carved the images of the three principal gods—Perkuna, the mighty thunderer, the god of fire, in the likeness of an angry man with a flame-coloured face, his head also crowned with flames; Potrimpos, the giver of fruitfulness, of prosperous harvests and productive waters, in the form of a young man adorned with garlands of ears of corn; and, thirdly, that of the god Pikullas, the lord of death and annihilation, who destroys what Potrimpos creates. This last deity was represented in the form of an aged man with a face deadly pale, and with a white cloth round his head. Much dreaded was this cruel god of death, for *he required always the sacrifice of what was dearest*. To all these gods not only oxen, horses, and goats, but children and prisoners were offered as victims, and their blood poured over the roots of the sacred tree.

The Christians who dwelt in the lands bordering on the wildernesses tenanted by these wild Prussians had many reasons for desiring their conversion; for they might, it was hoped, be at least converted into more peaceful neighbours, if not into good Christians: but it was not easy to see how this was to be effected; for not only were they a fierce race, by no means disposed to receive favourably any attack on their "church by law established," but they could not well be brought to listen, for they were not any

where collected together in villages or towns, but scattered about in the recesses of the forests and morasses by which their country was covered. But there were not wanting in those days valiant soldiers of Christ, who were ready to volunteer on the most forlorn hope, and the waters of the Vistula had been already more than once crimsoned with the blood of martyrs. One of the first of these, according to the chronicles, was St. Adalbert, who in the year 997, in the month of April, landed with two companions on the shores of what is now called the Frisch Haff, some way to the east of Dantzic, and then sent back the vessel, that had brought him thither, and the armed escort that had been given him, lest, as the men belonged to a nation that had often been engaged in hostilities with the native Prussians, their presence might excite fear and distrust; voluntarily depriving himself thus of all help of man, that he might the better perform his work, but full of confidence in that of God. They were soon perceived by the savages, who rushed towards them with wild yells and uproar; but the good fathers stood steady, and had even commenced operations by singing a psalm, when one of the wild men, snatching up the rudder of his canoe, struck Adalbert a violent blow across the back. He fell to the ground, but, soon recovering himself, poured out a thanksgiving that he had been found worthy to receive "at least one stroke for his crucified Saviour."

From whatever cause, the natives desisted from the attack; the missionaries were permitted to leave the place, and crossing in a little canoe to another part of the river, landed again "on a Sabbath evening." The inhabitants here seemed at first more friendly: the chief of the village led them to his hut; and a great number of the people assembled, full of expectation to know who the strangers were, and why they had come. Hereupon Adalbert, who was acquainted, it appears, with their language, answered, "By birth, I am a slave; the country where I was born is called Bohemia, and my name is Adalbert. The object of my journey is your salvation; for I am come that you may abandon your false gods, who are deaf and dumb, and learn to know your Creator, the one only true God, believe in his name, and obtain the



heavenly joys that he has prepared for you." This "neat speech" was not followed however by any applause; for scarcely had he uttered these words than there arose a wild yell, and the savage men rushed towards him stamping on the ground, and swinging their clubs round their heads, with looks of the utmost fury, exclaiming, "Away with you and your gods!—one moment longer, and you, shall die!"

Driven forth once more, Adalbert and his companions debated whether they should not leave this perverse people and seek some other; who might be more willing to receive their message. But it happened that night that Brother Gaudentius dreamed a dream, or was favoured with a vision; which same vision, it afterwards appeared, was also, in a wonderful manner, present to another monk in his convent in distant Italy. He saw standing upon an altar a golden goblet half filled with wine, and seeing no one near, he thought to taste it, and approached the altar; but as he was about to take it up a voice warned him that the cup had been filled for Adalbert, who should drink of it on the following day. At these words Gaudentius awoke, and, trembling, related his dream to the saint, who replied, "God grant, my son, that thy dream may be fulfilled, but dreams are deceitful, and may not be trusted."

When the morning broke they wandered farther, shortening the way by prayer, and by "praising God in spiritual songs;" and it was high noon when they emerged from a thickly-wooded region, through which they had been hitherto journeying, into a tract of open land, of which a part was sown with corn. Here Gaudentius, one of the brethren, said mass, and Adalbert received the holy sacrament, after which they took some food, and then lay down to rest. Adalbert, about a stone's throw from his companions, and within shadow of some mighty trees: but a fearful peril was hovering over them; for Adalbert was lying within the precincts of a sacred grove, which it was death for a stranger to enter, and had unconsciously committed a crime for which there was no expiation. They were aroused from their sleep by a terrible cry, and looking up saw a crowd of enraged heathens rushing

towards them, who soon surrounding them, seized them, with every mark of fury, and bound them fast. As Adalbert stood thus in bonds, the remembrance of the dream, and of the cup that he was to drink, flashed across him, but he stood erect and fearless, and spoke only words of consolation to his companions:—"Mourn not, my brothers; we suffer these things only for the faith, and for the glorious name of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. What is nobler, what is grander, what is sweeter, than to give our lives for the Saviour? Scarcely had he uttered these words, with the holy fervour of inspiration, than a priest of the idolaters rushed upon him, and plunged a spear into his breast. The wild swarm, who seemed to have waited for this as a signal, threw themselves upon him, and they also imbrued their hands in the blood of the saint, and he fell, "spreading out his arms in the form of a cross," and praying for the forgiveness of his murderers. His companions, though at the time carried away as prisoners, were afterwards allowed to escape; so that it is probable that the slaughter of Adalbert was not so much an act of mere savage fury, as what, in the eyes of the perpetrators, was regarded as the just punishment of his crime, the desecration of their sacred grove. The mutilated body of the saint was, according to the legend, preserved in a miraculous manner, until the two fugitive monks had time to reach Poland, and tell the tale to Duke Boleslav, who offered to purchase it from the Prussians for its weight in silver; but, marvellous to tell, those who were sent to the heathen land to conclude the bargain, pay the silver, and bring away the saint, found that it weighed nothing at all. What the Prussians thought of the matter we do not learn, but the body was brought to Poland, and carried in solemn procession to Gnesen, where it was buried in the cathedral, working, of course, numberless miracles by the way, as well as after it was deposited in its final resting-place. The fame of these miracles reached even to Italy, and to the Emperor Otto III., who resolved thereupon to make a pilgrimage to the grave; and came accordingly, accompanied by a splendid train of princes, knights, and nobles, and was met by the Duke with his magnificent court, clad in gold embroidered

dresses and rich furs—and on this occasion the road leading to the cathedral was for miles covered with fine cloth. Such honours were paid in those days to what was deemed holiest and best—better, perhaps, than homage to a “railway king.”

In the high religious excitement of that period—the year 1000—when the second coming of Christ, and the earthly resurrection of the dead, was confidently looked for, the fate of Adalbert was more likely to attract imitation, than to deter others from following his example; and accordingly one missionary after another passed on to perish in an attempt, vain enough, it seemed, as far as the Prussians were concerned, but which did not fail at least to win the crown of martyrdom, the glorious rewards they sought. Shall we sneer or smile at their enthusiasm? Are we then prepared, like them, to abandon home, friends, life itself, for what we deem holiest and highest? If not, we need scarcely thank Heaven that we “are not as these men.”

Two hundred years more passed away, and though little or no success had attended the efforts of the missionaries, another and another still succeeded; and now it was a monk of the Cistercian order who threw himself “once more into the breach” to combat with the powers of darkness. He came from “the beautiful convent of Oliva, near Dantzic;” for in the course of this time the country west of the Vistula had been gradually conquered and appropriated by princes professing the Christian faith, and the wild inhabitants driven back upon its eastern shore. Brother Christian had been distinguished from his youth up for his industry and love for all kinds of learning, but was not without suspicion of defective orthodoxy, and of having found the conventual life somewhat dreary and stupid. To our modern Protestant notions, indeed, it does sometimes seem that even martyrdom by the heathen must have lost much of its terrors when compared with the killing *ennui* of such a routine; but be that as it may, Brother Christian and two or three chosen companions set out undaunted on their perilous undertaking, exchanging the narrow round of penances, scourgings, and *soi-disant* devotional exercises, for the more inspiring task

of sowing in the wilderness the seed which they hoped would be fruitful in blessings for generations yet unborn. Christian seems to have possessed, in no ordinary degree, the qualifications desirable for his high office. He was mild in his temper and deportment, of spotless purity of life, wise in his choice of means, and prudent and cautious in all his proceedings. He had taken care to make himself previously acquainted, as far as circumstances permitted, with the religion, mode of life, and customs of the Prussians, and could make himself well understood in their language; he was full of ardent zeal for the holy doctrine he professed, yet tolerant,\* for his time, of the errors of the benighted races amongst whom he was going, and had the faith of an apostle in the divinity of his mission. He set out with the sanction and benediction of his abbot, and crossed the Vistula into the land of Culm, being probably induced to choose this district because it lay nearest to Pomerania, and its inhabitants were therefore familiar at least with the external form of Christianity.

The exertions of Christian and his brother missionaries met with almost unhopcd-for success: many of the chiefs of the Prussians received baptism, and professed themselves converted; and in the year 1209 or 1210 he joyfully set forth on a journey to Rome to lay an account of his proceedings, as in duty bound, before the head of the church.

The holy father heard with high approbation the news of "the promising growth of the seed that had been sown in the vineyard of the Lord;" and wrote to the Archbishop of Gnesen and the neighbouring princes to afford every possible assistance to the good work so happily begun.

Attempts had, indeed, been made by some envious brethren to insinuate many things to the discredit of Brother Christian and his fellow-missionaries, who ear-

\* The title of a writing left by this Christian, on the subject of the superstitions of the Prussians, "*Liber filiorum Belial cum suis superstitionibus*," may seem to militate against his character for mildness; but we must recollect that it was a time when hard words were everywhere in use, and that the book treated especially of the Prussian system of idolatry, which he necessarily regarded with a holy horror.

nestly engaged in their important office, but seldom returned to the cloister, and when they did, made rather light of many matters that seemed very important to the stay-at-home brethren; they cared evidently little about the petty routine of its affairs, and were suspected of carelessness in the observance of some of its rules of discipline.

This enmity excited against them had even gone so far, that they had been on one or two occasions refused admittance into the Cistercian hospitals, on pretence that they no longer belonged to the order. The pope, however, would pay no attention to these squabbles, but wrote to the superiors of the convents, earnestly exhorting them to repress this spirit of jealousy, and show all possible favour to the men who had succeeded in kindling the light of the Gospel in lands hitherto covered with the darkness of idolatry, and Christian returned with a joyful heart to continue his labours.

But, alas! during his absence a sad change had taken place. Waldemar the First, King of Denmark, on some pretence connected with a quarrel with the princes of Pomerania, had broken into Prussia with a numerous army, swept across it like a whirlwind, doing of course all possible mischief by the way, and destroying not only the crops of corn and little possessions of the inhabitants, but with them all present hopes of a spiritual harvest. The very name of Christian had become odious, and fierce bands of heathen Prussians had broken into the Culm district with fire and slaughter, and forced most of the new converts to leave it, and return with them into the idolatrous country. The territories of the Duke of Masovia also were attacked with such fury, that it appeared likely that he would be totally overwhelmed unless he received some powerful assistance.

Bishop Christian, for he had, in the meantime, been raised to the dignity of first bishop in Prussia, had no choice but to apply to the holy see, but the times were unfavourable to his wishes: his first patron, Pope Innocent III., had died, and his successor Honorius was zealously engaged in endeavouring to get up a crusade to the East and had little attention or sympathy to bestow on the

infidels of the North. Only after the lapse of a year could the bishop obtain permission to call on the Christian world in the pope's name to assist him in recovering his converts ; but he was not permitted to apply to any who had already taken the cross for Palestine, or who had even afforded any pecuniary contribution to the crusade. He was furnished with power, however, to declare that service in Prussia should be considered equally meritorious, and obtain the same remission of sins, as if rendered in the Holy Land. Armed with these spiritual weapons, Christian returned again to the scene of his labours ; but as he found the country once more quiet, he seems to have hoped that it might still be possible to effect his purpose by more peaceful methods ; and instead of making use of the authority with which he had been intrusted to raise a military force, he summoned more missionaries, and set to work again by the same methods as before, and again had reason to rejoice in the result of his efforts.

But the lull was only temporary ; the wild Prussians soon renewed their hostilities ; the country of Masovia became the scene of the most frightful outrages ; three hundred churches, chapels, and monasteries were burnt, the priests and monks put to cruel tortures, women and children frequently carried into slavery, or murdered when they could not keep up with the rapidity of the march of their captors. Under these circumstances, to delay longer was to expose the Christians to certain destruction ; the crusade to Prussia was preached accordingly, and in the spring of 1219 a motley horde of crusaders entered Prussia ; many enticed by the hopes of conquest, and some even, in their ignorance of the nature of the country they were going to, dreaming of riches. Others again, who were more disinterested, hoped to exterminate, root and branch, the idolatrous nation, and plant in their stead Christians of the right orthodox kind. Earnest and incessant were the exhortations of Bishop Christian to them, to remember that they were warriors of Christ ; that they had come to save the souls of the heathen, not to reduce their bodies to slavery, in which condition they would only more fatally persist in their errors ; but the Prussians soon found that their conversion to Christianity

was equivalent to the loss of their freedom, and resisted accordingly.

Three years long the crusading army remained in the country ; but except that the district of Culm was recovered, and a few castles built, with little or no good result. The Prussians were quiet, but not conquered ; for they had merely hidden themselves in their forests and morasses, and were watching their opportunity to take a terrible revenge. The Duke of Masovia, in the mean time, had bestowed on Bishop Christian large tracts of the land of Culm, professedly in gratitude for his services ; but the good bishop profited but little by the present, for the land was a mere desolate wilderness, and forming the advanced post towards the country of the wild Prussians, must necessarily be defended against their inroads ; so that the advantage of the gift was mostly on the side of the donor, to whom the bishop's land would serve as a wall of defence, and who had in reality only shifted a very troublesome burden from his own shoulders to those of Christian.

In the summer of 1224, a great body of Prussians crossed the Vistula into Pomerania, laid the country waste, far and wide, penetrated as far as the before-mentioned convent of Oliva, took it by storm, carried off the monks as prisoners, and put them to death amidst terrible tortures. In this extremity the Bishop bethought himself of applying for help to the powerful and valiant order of Teutonic knights, with whose master, Hermann de Salza, as well as with the history, character, and rules of the order, he had become acquainted during his visit to Italy. He was aware that they were said to be not without ambition, and if once summoned might not be easily dismissed ; but it was evident that a strong force was required to retain permanent possession of the country, and he seems to have been above the petty jealousy that would rather see it lost to Christendom than in the hands of a rival Order.

The Master was, however, at this moment meditating another grand effort for the recovery of the Holy Land, to whose service he had vowed to devote himself ; that land to which all devout aspirations of those ages turned, which seemed like a bright isthmus bridging over the

space between earth and heaven, and already glimmering with the dawn of a new and brighter day. The proposal to lead his knights to the conquest of Prussia was therefore far from welcome to De Salza; but, after some delay, he despatched two of them to bring him exact information of the state of Prussia. They arrived just as Duke Conrad was about to fight a great battle with the wild Prussians; and not being the men to stand idly by on such an occasion, engaged in it with right good will, and were left on the field covered with wounds, but, as it afterwards appeared not killed; for when sought for, by order of the Duke's consort, with a view of rendering them funereal honours, were found to be still alive, and ultimately recovered sufficiently to perform their errand.

Whatever their report was, the affair went on very slowly; and it was not till after the lapse of another twelvemonth, that the pope recognised and confirmed the liberal present made by Duke Conrad to the Teutonic Order of the country of the Prussians, and signified his entire approval of their proposed conquest and conversion, promising remission of sins to all who should proceed to Prussia on this holy errand. He exhorted the knights to valour and fortitude, and bade them remember that it was not their own cause in which they were engaged, but the cause of God; concluding with the words of Israel, "If thou goest forth to the battle with thine enemies, and thou seest that they are more in number than thine own people, fear not, for the Lord thy God is with thee."

Still, with all this encouragement, there was no haste on the part of the Master to engage in the undertaking; but it happened that, in the autumn of 1227, circumstances occurred that rendered the reconquest of Jerusalem more hopeless than ever. During the summer, great numbers of pilgrims had assembled in Italy, waiting for an opportunity to embark; but their ardour for the crusade had been much abated by the ravages of a terrible pestilential disease, to which great numbers of the people and several of the princes had fallen victims. The Emperor (Frederick II.) had nevertheless embarked, but falling sick at sea, had been compelled to put back; and



the pilgrims, already much disheartened, now dispersed on all sides ; so little was left of that quenchless fervour of faith and hope, which had borne the first crusaders over so many hardships and dangers. The Pope, disappointed and enraged somewhat more than became his holiness, launched his thunderbolts against the Emperor : the temporal majesty made excuses ; but they were deemed insufficient, and the breach became every day wider.

This division between the two heads of the Christian world annihilated for the moment all hopes of a successful expedition to Palestine ; and the Master now turned his thoughts more earnestly towards Prussia, as affording a sphere of action for the Order, and a means of fulfilling their vows. There was little in the prospect to tempt ambition or avarice. Prussia was no Mexico or Peru ; but a region of desolate, sandy wastes, vast dreary marshes, and almost impenetrable forests, tenanted by the elk, the bear, and the black wolf : it had no wealthy cities, no golden treasures to despoil, in the name of St. Peter or a most catholic king : there was, indeed, small prospect of aught but hunger and hard blows for those who should attempt its conversion, and the Prussians were no timid Peruvians, but a hardy and hostile race. A considerable territory was, indeed, offered, that is to him who could get it ; but it had first to be conquered from the fierce and now victorious barbarians, from whom the Christians were everywhere flying. The wild Prussians laughed at first at the handful of "black men with white mantles,"\* who had come to take possession of their country, as they did also afterwards, when they saw them "eat grass like horses," that is, vegetables ; for, like the wandering Tatar races of the present day, they themselves lived only on milk, meat, and a little corn. But there was an invisible force in these "black men," not to mention their superior discipline and skill in the arts of war, of which the wild Prussians knew nothing. It was not long before they learned to make a truer estimate.

The strange foe that had come to them thus, with the sword in one hand, and the offer of unknown blessings in

\* The Teutonic knights wore black armour

the other, boldly asserted their claim to the land by the Duke of Masovia. The barbarians replied that Conrad of Masovia had given what was not his to bestow. The land belonged to them, and to their fathers before them; and had not Conrad paid them tribute of clothes and horses, they would have driven him out long ago. The Christian knights performed prodigies of valour, but they were scarcely in the proportion of one to a thousand, so few, indeed, that it seems scarcely credible that they could have set about such an enterprise with such means; but the path of duty and honour lay straight before them, and in such a case they did not stop to calculate consequences. They had scarcely any hope of human help, for the old crusading enthusiasm had, as we have seen, in a great measure died away; and as to Duke Conrad, he was known to be in straits enough before he summoned them to his assistance; their courage and their confidence were drawn from quite another source—it was the power of faith, the power of conviction, that their cause was the cause of God; that the ultimate victory of the cross over heathen idolatry was certain; that the divine light that had arisen on the world was destined as inevitably to put to flight the errors of paganism as the morning sun to chase away the shadows of the night. Their mortal life might be lost in the attempt, but they triumphed even in perishing, for the heavenly one was secure.

The conflict was long and desperate: the Prussians fought for freedom and father-land; if not for hearths and altars, at least for kettles and holy-oaks, and for religion, language, and national existence; the knights, nothing doubting, for the blessing of Heaven and holy church, to redeem the poor sons of Belial, as they called them, from the power of Satan, and urged by such motives they performed many heroic deeds. We hear of one devoting himself to inevitable destruction, to cover the retreat of his companions through a narrow pass; of another, aged and blind, remaining alone in a castle for a similar purpose, ringing the bell at regular times to induce the besiegers to believe that the garrison was still within, and tranquilly awaiting the approach of slow and certain death. We find also, what is perhaps more remarkable

the warrior, who has performed the most gallant feats of arms in the field, returning to subject himself to the rigid discipline of the convent, prostrating himself in sorrow and humiliation for sin, and scourging himself before the altar, or watching during the heavy hours of the night by the bedside of a sick and wounded brother. Great, indeed, is the sanctifying power of conscience. A Teutonic knight, innocently believing that he is doing God service by slaying the infidels, remains pure in heart, while he daily dips his hands in blood. An English gentleman goes out to India, it may be, at the fiat of the minister for the time being, or in consequence of a vote in the House of Commons, kills as many Affghans, or others, as may appear expedient or practicable, thinks of duty and the service of his country, and returns home in spite of what he has done, a man of honour and humanity. Is the one more blamable than the other? or may we not even say, that the motives of the knight were, of the two, the higher, and, according to his view, the more unquestionable?

A gleam of the old crusading spirit broke forth again at the news of the exploits of the small band of Christian knights who were thus struggling to stem the tide of heathen barbarism, which but for them might have flooded the north-eastern frontier of Christendom. Duke Henry the Bearded of Silesia, the Margrave of Meissen, the Burgrave of Magdeburg, and a numerous train of knights, and nobles, and men-at-arms, hastened to the assistance of the Order; fortresses were built along the line of the Vistula and the sea-coast; and by the time when the frost had rendered the ice on the lakes and marshes firm enough to march across, a force of twenty thousand men was assembled. Even after this, however, the Order suffered many reverses; the brave Landmaster himself was at one time nearly starved to death, being shut up in a fort surrounded by an immense body of the wild men, and only relieved at the last moment by Duke Otto of Brunswick and his 700 lances. But still the knights struggled on, and fought the good fight that was to bring "souls for heaven, and kingdoms" for their holy order. Castle after castle arose, chiefly by the labour of their

numerous prisoners, and the land as it was conquered was bestowed in fiefs on German nobles, who gave in return their services as soldiers. The Grand Master himself came to Prussia, conferred many privileges on the towns of Culm and Thorn, and made many wise and prudent arrangements for the encouragement of colonists from Germany. It was thought by some that both he and his Landmaster, Hermann Balk, were less zealous than they might have been in the matter of the baptism of the heathen; and it was said they would pay little heed when told that many who had been baptized still worshipped in secret their ancient gods. He recommended his clergy not to go sharply to work with these backsliders, but to try gentle methods first, and not be in haste to punish such offences. One thing that strikes us in the conduct of the Order is, that while animated by the most boundless faith in the divine protection and assistance, they never relied, as mere fanatics might have done, on its supplying to them the place of common prudence and precaution, and never neglected any human means within their power for the attainment of their object.

It has been said to have been a crowning merit of Napoleon, that "while he never neglected the least particular of preparation, of patient adaptation, he nevertheless had a sublime confidence in his destiny, which at the right moment repaired all losses, and demolished cavalry, infantry, king and kaiser, as with irresistible thunderbolts." These old Teutonic knights did not believe in "destiny," but in the Divine Providence of God, and with this difference the same thing might be said of them.

The usual plan pursued in the conquest of the country appears to have been to get possession of some spot of land suitable for the erection of a fort or castle, and to set about it immediately. In the first instance, regard was had merely to its fitness for defence, that it might serve as a refuge for the small parties of knights against an enemy so greatly superior in numbers, and all subordinate matters connected with rules of the Order were for the moment set aside. Afterwards, when the conquest of the surrounding country was completed, spacious and suit

able houses were erected, in which the monastic life was resumed in all its severity.

That the natives were not finally subdued without much bloodshed, that the history of a war of fifty-three years would furnish the record of many acts of cruelty and oppression, is certain. When was there ever a war in which acts of cruelty and oppression did not take place? But these were accounted for, though not justified, by the terrible tortures inflicted by the natives on such of the knights as fell into their hands. It is true that, as in most similar cases, the conquered party have left no narrative which might be compared with that of the victors; but the best proof that their severity did not exceed what it was supposed the necessity of the case demanded, is, that when the conquest was completed, we find the Prussians placed on the same footing as the Germans who had been invited into the country. When the natives had once submitted to receive baptism, and to conform to the external ceremonies of the Christian religion—a conformity which the knights believed essential to their salvation—the Order seems honestly to have desired and promoted to the utmost of its power the welfare of the country over which it had assumed dominion.

“The Teutonic knights,” says Voigt in his valuable *History of Prussia*, “left the inhabitants of the country in possession of their land on the same conditions, and under the same obligations, as the German immigrants. They regarded themselves, indeed, as the unquestionable sovereigns of the country they had won, and required feudal service for the land they bestowed; but this, as well as rent in corn, wax, or money, or contributions of labour for the erection of castles, was in almost all cases the same for Prussians and Germans. Only here and there do we find any advantage allowed to the German, and then only on account of obviously superior merit. In the other relations of life the Landmaster and his knights showed the utmost tenderness and humanity to the new converts, and treated them in many instances rather as fathers and brothers than as masters and conquerors. The chronicles relate that they invited the new

Christians to hospitable entertainments, partook willingly of theirs in return, received the poor and sick Prussians with kindness and compassion in their hospitals, took care of the widows and orphans, whose husbands and fathers had fallen in the war, sent the most promising boys and young men to Germany to be instructed in the German language, as well as in the Christian religion, and employed for these purposes the pious contributions they received for the use of the Order, contenting themselves with the very moderate revenues they derived from the country itself." On account of these things the Teutonic brothers received great praise, even from those Prussians who still remained in their idolatry.

Although the Order was active in building churches and convents, and, of course, anxious to fill them with new converts, the Landmaster had expressly forbidden that anything like force should be used for this purpose; and if individual members occasionally violated the rules of gentleness and forbearance laid down for them, the Order in general was no more answerable than Christianity itself for offences committed in direct violation of its precepts. In the work of conversion, of preaching, and instruction of the heathen, we are told they were assisted by many pious men not belonging to the Order.

In the meantime flourishing cities were arising in many parts of the country, and rapidly effacing the traces of the desolating war. Not far from the spot visited three hundred years before by the English Wulfstan, whither the Scandinavian nations had come to trade with the wild Prussians for amber and ivory, the enterprising citizens of Lubeck had come to the aid of the Order, and founded a city near what was once a lonely castle, whose knightly garrison had often been surrounded by swarms of enemies, and once nearly destroyed. The new city of Elbing and the castle now lent each other mutual support. Its situation was uncommonly happy: to the north lay the Frische Haff and the Baltic, by which a communication was kept open with the mother-city of Lubeck; to the south an extensive lake, the Draussen lake, which afforded a ready means of intercourse with the interior; by the coast to eastward the inhabitants easily reached the province of

Samland, still rich in amber; and on the western side the waters of the Vistula offered a now secure highway. On this city, as well as on those of Culm, Thorn, and Marienwerder, which were all founded during the first seven years of the dominion of the Order, they bestowed privileges and immunities far beyond what at that time any other sovereign in Europe had willingly granted to his subjects. The land bestowed on the citizens was secured to them, and their heirs for ever, instead of reverting at every death, as in most feudal tenures, and requiring to be redeemed. The subjects of the Order paid only a small tax as an acknowledgment of its sovereignty, and in return claimed and received efficient protection whenever it was needed. In their cities the Order bound itself not to buy any houses; and if any should be left to them as a legacy by a citizen, to employ them strictly for the purposes pointed out by the donor, and to take on themselves all civic duties and obligations belonging to them—a striking exception to the usual conduct of their class, for in that age both nobles and churchmen were in the habit of claiming exemption in all such cases. The Order also built and endowed churches for all the cities, promising further grants of land when they should be needed. The rights of fisheries and of the chase, in every other part of Germany reserved exclusively to the nobles, were in Prussia readily granted to citizens with some few reservations, such as of salt, and of all the *gold* and *silver* to be found in the country. The citizens chose their own magistrates, who had salaries secured out of the produce of the pecuniary fines, by which most offences were at that time punished, and the consent of the Order only was necessary to confirm the appointments.

All right to the forced hospitalities which during the middle ages often proved so grievous a burden on subjects and vassals was distinctly disclaimed; and the freedom from any such obligation was allowed to extend to all land purchased by the citizens: no taxes were to be arbitrarily imposed; and such as were with the consent of the people established were to be extremely moderate.

If we compare these and other of their institutions to those of the same period in different countries, we can

hardly deny that the chivalrous masters of Prussia have every right to be regarded as among the most, if not the most liberal and enlightened sovereigns of their age; had the conquest of the country originated in the lust of gain, it would certainly have brought forth different fruit. The zeal of the knights was perhaps a mistaken one; their proceedings, doubtless, often rough enough, for it was a rough world in the thirteenth century; but their rule was certainly not, like that of most feudal lords, one continued course of insolent oppression and selfish covetousness. The inhabitants of the towns were mostly German immigrants; but a treaty made in 1249 with the Prussian converts gives, perhaps, a still more favourable view of the Teutonic brothers in their relations with their subjects.

This remarkable document commences with the declaration, that "All men are born free; that only infidelity to the true faith entails slavery;" and if we remember that infidels were then by all Christendom regarded as in a state of reprobation, we shall cease to wonder at such a qualification.

All rights of property are distinctly recognised in the natives as well as in their children and descendants; they are to be free to dispose of property, to marry, and exercise every personal right unrestricted. They are to choose some system of law (they chose that of Poland) by which they are to be governed; and they are to be allowed to attain to the dignity of the priestly office, and to the honour of knighthood. On the other hand, they are required to give up their practice of burning their dead with their slaves, horses, and armour; to serve no idols; nor heathen priests; to abolish polygamy, the sale of their daughters, the custom of murdering their infants, as well as the sick, aged, and infirm; to promise to have their children baptized; to assist in building churches; to confess and communicate at least once a year. The liberty of the people, in the sense in which the term is now understood, was certainly little thought of by the good knights; but their severities were rather those of parents who make a somewhat too literal application of Solomon's injunction not to spare the rod, than the selfish, grinding tyranny of the lord towards the serf.



The country advanced rapidly, all circumstances considered, under the rule of the Order ; but the wilderness itself was to be subdued as well as its fierce inhabitants to be subjected, and it was no holy day work. Sometimes one of those terrible sicknesses of an epidemic character, such as we hear of so frequently throughout the middle ages, would come to sweep off men and cattle, Christians and Pagans, with frightful rapidity, and leave the country half depopulated. Sometimes it seems to have raged chiefly among the newly converted Prussians, and is supposed to have been communicated to them by the pilgrims from various parts of Poland and Germany, who were, in truth, a sad rabble rout. On these occasions troops of the new converts forsook all and fled into the woods, and wild heathen priests came forth from hidden retreats in caves, and hollow trees, and poured forth their denunciations on the apostate land, ascribing the infliction, of course, to the wrath of the offended gods. Many of the poor people tried to keep matters smooth with both parties, the old and the new deities, by coming one day to the Christian altar, and the next creeping secretly to the sacred grove with an offering to the awful deities of the oak.

Sometimes the tide of the still pagan population which had been driven from the territories of the Order would return in overwhelming force, and pour over the country, while the solitary castles in which the knights were shut up were cut off as by a raging flood from all communication with each other, and their garrisons died of hunger within them. Many of the cities also were repeatedly besieged by the wild Prussians, and must have perished but for the assistance brought to them by sea. The fortune of the war fluctuated hither and thither—one day the knights were victorious, the next they were beaten. It was found necessary to abandon and burn some of the smaller towns towards the frontier, and the natives were inspired with fresh courage by the sight, and pressed on further and further. Cruelties were committed on both sides ; captive knights were roasted alive in their armour ; the noblest Prussians when taken were hanged without further ceremony on the nearest tree. Castles were de-

stroyed by the natives, and immediately built up again by the knights. By day and night, amidst the storms of winter, on the frozen lakes by moonshine, the bloody strife continued, but at length the wavering scale settled in favour of the Order; the country was left weak and exhausted; but the fearful convulsion was over, and health slowly returned. Numerous villages and towns arose; trade, industry, and population increased; and at length a flourishing, wealthy, and well-governed state occupied the place of those dreary forests, lakes, and stagnant pools and sandy wastes of old heathen Prussia.

Along the course of the Memel and the Vistula dikes were built, that their waters might no longer flood the surrounding country; agriculture and all useful arts were introduced, and valuable plants and animals before unknown. Few, if any, dynasties indeed present such a succession of virtuous and capable men, so desirous, apparently, of promoting the welfare of the country they governed, as the Masters of Prussia.

Among the memorials of their rule which excite the gratitude even of these distant generations, is the draining of what are now the richly productive lands near the mouths of the Vistula and Nogat. At the end of the thirteenth century it was a desolate, seemingly uninhabitable waste, covered with great muddy pools, and apparently bottomless morasses, where only in two or three places could be found a spot of ground firm enough for the erection of one or two huts, and these were the only traces of human existence it presented.

In 1288, the very first year of his administration, Landmaster Meinhardt of Querfurt took advantage of an interval when the attention of his wild neighbours on the east was occupied with a great incursion into Russia to commence the Herculean task of draining this vast dismal swamp, securing it against inundation, and rendering it a fertile and fit abode for men. Such a work would even now be attended with great expense and difficulty. Two great rivers had to be secured for miles by dikes of sufficient strength to resist the pressure of an enormous mass of water, often suddenly poured into them from above on the melting of the snows, as well as of the violence of the

tempests on that wind-beaten coast ; and these dikes had also to be carried from Elbing to Marienberg, across deep bogs, and plashy, slimy pools left by the wintry floods, when the ice-encumbered rivers had broken new channels in various directions. Under the Landmaster's zealous superintendence, thousands of workmen were employed constantly for six years at this undertaking, and at length he had the happiness of seeing his beneficent work completed. He had gained a truly glorious victory, not over the poor Prussians, but over those blind forces of material nature with which all men are called on to wage warfare until they shall be subdued to become the instruments of a rational will. The land was fairly won ; but the Landmaster did not rest till he had seen the lately dreary waste bringing forth abundant crops, and covered with an industrious population. The undertaking had of course often been pronounced impossible ; but Landmaster Meinhardt was of the class who trample on impossibilities. It is said of him "*Audebat enim aggredi rem arduam, quam alius timuerit cogitare.*" It is to be hoped that his name is not even now quite forgotten by those who gather in the golden harvest, from what has been ever since his time one of the richest and most fertile districts of Prussia.

But Meinhardt's care and activity was by no means limited to this district ; there is abundant evidence of the unwearied zeal with which he watched over the progress of agriculture and improvement in other parts of the country, no less than of the constant vigilance with which he guarded his people from external aggression. While the above-mentioned gigantic undertaking was still going on, we find him guiding a warlike band through the vast pathless wilderness of forests that stretched to an unknown distance to the north-east, and building two forts for the protection of the frontier, he and his knights guarding the workmen as they toiled from the assaults of the natives. Scarcely had he completed this business than he was recalled to the interior, by an extensive conspiracy of the newly converted Prussians, who could as yet very imperfectly appreciate many of the benefits conferred by the Order, but who daily felt the loss of the

wild freedom of their heathen state. They could also by no means understand the fanatical zeal which led the knights to go forth continually in pursuance of their vow to do battle with the infidels, even when the infidels were well inclined to leave them at peace ; and repeated insurrections were the consequence of the demands made by the Order for military service. Some of these might have proved fatal, but that the personal attachment to the brethren, which had been formed by some of the young Prussians brought up in their houses, led them to warn their benefactors of the danger, and brought on the discovery of the plot. The condition of the peasantry of Prussia, under the rule of the Teutonic knights, presents in many respects a favourable contrast with the cruel bondage of the same class over almost all the rest of Europe. The villages which they established were mostly peopled by Germans, who had fled thither to escape from the oppressions of their lords. To each of these a certain amount of land was assigned, and the peasants were to be free from every kind of forced labour, with the exception of giving once in the year eight days' work to the nearest house of the Order. The new settlers were to pay a certain fixed rent for their land ; but five, ten, or even fifteen years were to be allowed free from any kind of rent or tax whatever, that they might have time to establish themselves. Peasants who were too poor to purchase the necessary stock were usually provided by the Order with bees, sheep, fowls, &c. on condition of receiving half the produce. Some of the peasants appear even to have risen to a considerable degree of opulence ; and there is a tale of one who had become so rich, that he invited the Master and twelve of his knights to a banquet, and seated them upon a bench supported by twelve casks filled with money.—a story from which we may at all events infer that opulent peasants existed. Of the prejudice that elsewhere separated the chivalrous from the mercantile classes ; of the mixture of envy, contempt, and hatred, with which nobles usually regarded citizens, we find little trace ; on the contrary, the Order seems to have spared nothing for the encouragement and protection of the trade of the cities, and for the advancement or

their welfare in every direction to which their vision extended. They built not only churches for them, but town halls; established weekly markets to which the country people might bring their produce; in many instances, where it seemed necessary, wholly remitted for a long period the revenues derived from certain commodities; fixed just and uniform weights and measures, and erected in every town at least one bath-house for the use of the inhabitants—an instance of regard for public welfare which has only been imitated in London in 1846. But for the incessant and destructive wars which they persisted in waging with the infidels, their rule would have been far more beneficial to the country than it was; but even in spite of this, it made rapid advances in prosperity. Cities flourished, commerce increased, industry became ever more active. At one time, from 300,000 to 400,000 lasts of corn were in good years exported from the city of Dantzic. By the high road of the Vistula Poland poured her grain, and hemp, and flax, into the Prussian towns; by the Baltic came English cloth, and rich wines, and other costly goods from the south; and in Prussia no merchant or traveller had to fear the plunderings of petty princes or of robber knights. The government of the Order had for a long period really many claims to the character of paternity so falsely bestowed on many. Obedience was required, but the children received in return protection and true guidance.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE HOUSE OF MARIENBERG.

ON the borders of an ancient wood that stretched along the right bank of the Nogat river to the neighbourhood of the Draussen lake, a little chapel or shrine of the Virgin, had stood from the earliest times of the Teutonic rule.

It had been, as a matter of course, celebrated for miracles; and the frequent visits of pilgrims, attracted by its reputation in this line, had occasioned a little hamlet to grow up around it. Near this spot, in 1274, Landmaster Conrad of Thierberg began to build a castle, and, as it was to serve for a fortress for the protection of the river and the country to the west, as a convent, and as a hospital for the sick, (a purpose which, in accordance with their vows, the knights always provided for in their houses,) as well as for a residence for the Landmasters, it was made of great extent, strength, and beauty.

The situation was commanding—an eminence seventy or a hundred feet above the river, whose rapid waters almost washed its outer wall, and formed on that side a natural fortification.

Beyond the river to the west, the eye ranged over the fertile fields and meadows between the Vistula and the Nogat, and took in a considerable extent of Pomerania. To the east could often be seen, in clear weather the lake of Draussen, as it lay glittering in the morning sun, the towers of the castle of Holland on its shores, and the rich Werder as far as the city and castle of Elbing. The warder looking out from the lofty watchtower could follow the course of the Nogat till it mingled with the waters of the Frische Haff; and thus for many miles round, the whole surface of the country lay spread out like a map below Marienberg, so that from whatever quarter an enemy might approach he could hardly fail to be observed. A deep and broad moat surrounded the castle and its suburb on three sides, and on that next the river rose a strong wall, by which it was also separated from the little town that soon arose beneath its shelter, and which was defended by walls and ditches, so as to serve as an outwork to the castle.

For some years after its erection the internal life of the House of Marienberg was much the same as at most other convents of the order; a life dreary, repulsive, intolerable, we might think, yet the free choice of hundreds of men from the highest classes of society, who

renounced for its property and freedom, and all that is held dear and valuable, all the distinctions, and apparently all the happiness of life; but perhaps our theory of happiness requires revision.

It is impossible to doubt that this life was really led, the vows really observed, for a long period, with more or less strictness, by the majority of those who made them; for no community can exist and flourish upon fraud and falsehood, far less lay hold of the affections and the reverence of men as the Teutonic Order had done. It is a dangerous error to measure the strength of others by our own weakness, as we too often do. "*La vanité, mesurant les forces de la nature sur notre faiblesse, nous fait souvent regarder comme chimériques les qualités que nous ne sentons pas en nous-mêmes. La paresse et la vice s'appuient sur cette prétendue impossibilité et ce qu'on ne voit pas tous les jours, l'homme faible prétend qu'on ne voit jamais.*" When a new member of the Teutonic Order had taken the vows, a coarse dress and a little cell, which, small as it was, he had often to share with another, was offered him in exchange for all he had left. A straw mattress and a coverlet was his bed, and neither the little chamber nor any thing it contained was ever allowed to be locked, for nothing could be his individual property—whatever he had belonged to the community. Each house contained sixteen, eighteen, or twenty-four knights, besides a superior or commander, and a house-commander for the administration of domestic affairs, to both of whom the knights had to pay the strictest obedience. The first duty of a commander was the administration of the district in which the house was situated. He distributed the land into fiefs; determined the rents, taxes, and duties to be paid; appointed the bailiffs or headmen of the villages, and the extent of their several jurisdictions; settled disputes among the inhabitants, and was responsible for their general well-being. He was obliged, however, to lay an account of his whole administration before the Landmaster, and to keep an exact record of all his receipts and expenses. Should these appear unsatisfactory, he could be summarily dis-

missed from his office, or removed elsewhere to another. In time of war the knights of his convent and the men of his district had to march under his banner.

Besides all this, he was responsible for the conduct and discipline of the brethren, for the due performance of religious worship, for the care of the sick in the hospitals and infirmaries, and also for the proper application of the revenues of the house. No inmate of the house dared leave it for a single day without his knowledge; no brother might so much as ride out for an hour without his permission, or keep in his possession the smallest sum of money. If he were called away, as often happened, on a mission to a distant country, to attend a chapter, or on any business connected with the affairs of his district, the House-commander took his place, and entered on all his rights and duties; otherwise the latter had to superintend only the internal affairs of the house, the cultivation of the gardens, the employment and pay of workmen, the getting in and distribution of stores for the house and hospital, and to fill generally the office of a house-steward. The priests of the order, of whom there were mostly about six to each house, had of course much the same duties as elsewhere, but they had to attend the knights in their campaigns against the infidels, and were allowed to perform worship at a portable altar which they carried with them. They had to submit to the same regulations of life as the knights, and even, with some qualifications, to the same punishments, in cases of transgression.

The life of a knight was regulated even to the minutest particulars, and the employment of every moment of his time rigidly prescribed. The laws of the order and the unchangeable discipline of the house accompanied him even into the solitude of his cell, and of course enjoined him to spend a considerable time in various devotional exercises in the church or chapel, which always formed part of every order house. In that of Marienberg the brethren had to assemble four times a-day—at six, nine, twelve, and three, for *Prime*, *Tertia*, *Sexte*, and *Nones*; then followed vespers, *Complett*, the night and morning offices. In the intervals of these pious performances the



knights practised various kinds of chivalrous exercises,—a most needful refreshment, we must think, to the wearisomeness of this perpetual repetition. There were, however, certain hours appointed for assembling in the fine stately hall, where something like conversation and social amusement went on; chess, draughts, and other games were played, though not for money, and where the intercourse of real friends was probably enjoyed with a zest scarcely to be imagined by those who are under no restraint. Fortunately there is a principle in human nature to which a fixed routine is eminently agreeable, so that with the help of the frequent diversion of fighting the Prussians, and baptizing them *en gros et en détail*,\* the good knights did not, perhaps, on the whole, suffer more from *ennui* than English gentlemen of our time with parliamentary debates and grouse shooting. What is most to be regretted is the likelihood that devotional feeling should be worn out in this excess of utterance, as all feelings are pretty sure to be, when too much is said about them.

After the office called Complett, the brethren were strictly enjoined to keep silence till the following morning at Primes. Every Sunday a chapel was held, at which the rules of the order were read over, like the Articles of War in Her Majesty's ships, and at these meetings the general affairs of the house, it is to be presumed, were discussed; but as no record was kept of what went forward, as every brother was sworn to silence, and no stranger was ever admitted, this is only matter of conjecture. The attendance on the sick, and the performance of other works of mercy, which broke in some measure this monotonous routine, appear to have been regarded almost as recreations.

That men from the noblest families in Germany, even princes, should renounce the luxury and splendour of their rank, the attractions of the world, and the unrestrained indulgence of the will, for such a life of restraint and privation, might seem impossible, were it not noto-

\* It was not uncommon, when converts were many, and names or time scarce, to divide them into heaps, and call fifty or a hundred at a time by the same name.

rious how little happiness these things really confer, that it is the state of the mind itself, the inward conviction, that alone gives worth and value to any mode of life.

“ From the soul itself must issue forth  
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
Enveloping the earth.”

We have instances enough that poverty of spirit, languid affections, palled senses, torpid intellect, can render dreary, empty, and stupid, a life rich in all the external means of usefulness and enjoyment. A dull and cloudy sky can cast a gloom and heaviness over the richest landscape, whilst sunshine from above can turn barrenness itself into beauty and glory. Such a sunshine is the ever-living consciousness of a holy spiritual presence on the earth.

Great was the change which came over the hitherto silent and monotonous life of Marienberg, when, in the beginning of the fourteenth century, it was determined to make it the seat of government of the order which, since the possessions in the East had been abandoned, had hitherto been in Venice, where the Masters had always resided. Many jealousies had from time to time arisen, not only with the suspicious and tyrannical government of that republic, but between the Masters and the powerful and warlike Land-masters of Prussia, who, though nominally subordinate, were, from the extent of the territory which they governed, and its unsettled condition, in which so much necessarily depended on their personal character and conduct, really in a more important and independent position than the Masters themselves. The terrible persecutions of the Templars in 1305 and 1306, had naturally awakened some apprehension in the Teutonic Order; for its rapid rise to power and prosperity had of course raised up enemies, and awakened feelings of envy, such as those which, whatever were the sins of the Templars, had unquestionably been the primary cause of their downfall. Accusations, indeed, of a similar character to those which had proved so fatal to the Templars had actually been preferred against the Teutonic knights also; but that the attempts to fix on them any of these charges

entirely failed, is one proof among many, that their lives were, at this period, tolerably in accordance with their vows. The danger, however, of allowing the order to remain, at such a critical period, "a house divided against itself," became now evident, and preparations for the removal of the Master to Marienberg were made with the greatest celerity. Thousands of skilful workmen were despatched thither, to erect a second and statelier castle for the court of the order, and to this was afterwards added another, for attendants and domestic offices. The oldest wing contained the church, the chapter-room, and the vaults where the remains of departed knights were deposited, and the central and most magnificent part of the edifice, the vast banqueting-hall, the great hall of audience, and the apartments for the Master and the knights. The walls, even in the upper stories, were nine or ten feet thick; yet, notwithstanding its extent and strength, the whole was beautifully and elaborately decorated. Not the least remarkable parts of the building were the subterranean vaults, descending two and three stories deep, and of such prodigious extent, that it seems impossible they can have been intended for cellars or prisons only. They were, there is reason to believe, used as asylums, where the country people might store up their corn and cattle during the fierce inroads of barbarous races to which they were so much exposed. On no part of the edifice, however, was there so profuse an expenditure of money and labour as on the church. The vast vaulted ceiling, supported by sculptured figures of saints, who, as they were, in the belief of that age, the main props of the spiritual edifice of the church, were here, in the usual symbolical style, made to sustain the material structure; its lines of marble columns; its paintings, where were represented, in glowing colours, the chief events in the lives of those holy men and women; the organ, which, small as it was, was the wonder of the whole country; the altars, with their vessels of gold and silver, and relics enriched with costly gems; the chapels, with their shrines and ever-burning lamps;—all this must have opened a new world of beauty and awful splendour to the rude people of this remote wild land.

The most peculiar decoration of the castle of Marienberg was a colossal figure of the Virgin with the Infant in her arms, which was fixed in a lofty niche in the outer wall, so as to be seen far and wide over the country. It was painted in the most showy style, purposely to attract the attention of the natives; the arch over the head was of a rich blue colour, and sown with golden stars; the figure, robed with the utmost magnificence in crimson and gold, reflected, as it was turned towards the east, the beams of the rising sun, and shed a glory over the edifice of which the "Queen of heaven" was the especial patroness; and, though to a more refined taste, this gaudy pomp of attire seems but like a profanation of the saintly and spiritual purity of the virgin mother, to the simple apprehension of the half-savage Prussian it might have appeared a fitting symbol of the heavenly.

With the arrival of the High Master a new epoch began, not only for the castle and town of Marienberg, but for Prussia, and the whole north of Germany. The number of knights and priests was increased to fourfold what it had been, and the inhabitants of the castle were still further augmented by the continual arrival of strangers from all countries, messengers from foreign courts, and royal and distinguished guests of the Master. The communications thus opened with every part of Europe, the constant intercourse with so wide a circle, could not but exercise a powerful influence on the character of its hitherto secluded inmates. As the seat of the chief power, Marienberg became, in political importance, as well as external grandeur, the queen and head of all the houses of the Order; its stately halls echoed no longer only the choral chants of the brethren, but the manifold sounds of active business and even pleasure; for though the daily life of the Masters in private was still frugal and simple, though they still often sat with the rest at the convent table and partook of the same frugal fare, yet there were now frequent occasions when, in their character of sovereigns, they gave costly entertainments, and kept open house in princely style. Over all Prussia a new life was awakened by the concentration of the wealth and the energy of this mighty Order within the

limits of a country hitherto regarded as beyond the pale of civilised Europe ; and the Master, from being merely a tolerated guest in a foreign state, and the chief of many scattered communities, rose to high political rank among the principalities and powers of the North.

For the domestic history of Marienberg and its Masters in their days of glory, there is extant a source of the amplest information in the account-books of the House-Commanders, containing the minutest details concerning the daily private life of the Master and the brethren : what they required for food and maintenance ; what was consumed in kitchen and buttery ; what was laid up in storehouses and granaries ; what every officer paid to servants and workmen for the building and repairs within and without the castle, for the fortifications, for improvements in various departments—Church, chapels, and private rooms. The whole expense incurred in time of war for weapons, armour, and munitions of all kinds, and the accounts of subordinate officers—masters of the horse, of the kitchen, and the cellar, of fisheries and gardens, and all other departments, are accurately entered.

The book is also extant in which the grand treasurer kept an account of the total expenditure of the Order in general, or of the Master in particular, for war, for diplomacy, for travelling in foreign countries or in the territories of the Order ; for the reception and entertainment of strangers of distinction, princes, ambassadors, and others, and brethren from distant parts ; for the costly presents in which the Masters took pride in displaying the magnificence of the Order, in gifts to convents and churches, in charitable donations to the poor and the unfortunate. All these details of expenditure throw a light into the most hidden recesses of domestic life, as well as on the most public transactions of the High Masters, and show them now as sovereigns of a considerable empire—now as valiant solders, and wise and experienced generals—now as men and brethren living in the simplest manner, on terms of intimacy and equality in a circle of friends ; sometimes surrounded by royal splendour and all the glittering pomp of war, at others passing their days in

the stillness, sobriety, and monotony of monastic life. In these archives, also, are contained lists of all the cities, lands, villages, and houses over which the Order claimed jurisdiction ; accounts of the relations in which each one stood to it ; and of the rents and taxes paid, which seem to have been in most cases extremely low. There are, therefore, ample means of forming a correct judgment concerning the conduct and manner of life of the Order and its rulers.

Immediately after his election to his important office, which took place in the chapter-room of Marienberg, the Master rose at once from the condition of a simple knight to be the sovereign of Prussia and the all-powerful chief of the Order, and took possession of the central castle of Marienberg, which, as we have seen, contained the state apartments destined for his reception. The one called particularly the Master's room was lighted by five windows (a great distinction at that time), richly adorned with paintings, and commanding a view of the great court, so that he could keep an eye on the movements of his knights ; a side-door led to a smaller apartment for the transaction of business, and another into a private dining-room, where he might receive guests in a more confidential and friendly manner than in the magnificent banquetting-hall beyond. It was in the latter, however, that he first made his appearance in state after his election, to meet the Landmasters, Commanders, Grand Hospitaller Marshals, and knights of the Order, and entertain them with royal splendour. The account-books contain very minute details concerning all that was eaten and drunk on these occasions ; the vegetables, the numerous kinds of fish, and meat, and game, the rare fruits, and spices, and costly wines from Hungary, Italy, and Greece, which supplied the table, as well as of the dishes and goblets of gold and silver, the alabaster cups and gilt bison's horns, which adorned it. Music and song also were not wanting to add to the hilarity of the guests ; fiddlers and trumpeters, minstrels and tellers of stories, besides mountebanks and conjurors, and such like, who, according to the strict laws of the Order, were classed as belonging to the service of the devil. The festival once over, how-

ever, the Master returned to a calm and sober way of life, more in accordance with his vows, and in which his chief recreations were music and chess. A great deal of his time was necessarily occupied with correspondence ; and among the items of expenditure in the accounts of the commanders we find, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, two hundred quires of paper, and a hundred sheets of parchment annually for the Master's letters. The library, also, was an object of great attention at Marienberg, and contained not only devotional works, but books on historical and geographical subjects ; and in the private apartment of one of the Masters hung a large map of the world, as it was then known, on which a high value was set. Copyists of manuscripts, painters, and skilful artists in various departments, were kept constantly employed at Marienberg, and liberally paid. In the summer, we hear, the Master spent much of the day in the open air, in the beautiful gardens which extended to a considerable distance towards Elbing. Nearest the castle lay a garden laid out in the Italian taste ; and beyond this the hospital garden, for the recreation of the sick and infirm, for whose use, also, a convenient summer-house was erected. Further on there was even a kind of zoological garden, where were kept bears, apes, and whatever animals of distant lands could be obtained ; amongst these, especial mention is made of a lion and five large buffaloes. No inconsiderable items of the Master's expenditure are presents to almost every guest who visited his court : sometimes of rather an odd description ; as, for instance, those made to a certain duke of Lithuania, who received not only a horse and a ducal robe, but four pairs of shoes and four pairs of boots ; and all foreign ambassadors and messengers who came to Marienberg were maintained, during their stay, at the Master's expense. If they took up their abode at a hostelry, they were provided with all that they required for themselves and their attendants, and the whole reckoning was then discharged by the Master. We hear of Burgomasters from Hamburg and Lübeck, ambassadors from Greece and Persia, besides numberless counts and dukes from Germany, whose expenses were all

defrayed by the hospitality of the Order ; and at the same time it appears that in the frequent progresses of the Master and his court through his dominions, whenever he had occasion to make use of any house of public entertainment, he always paid every expense incurred to the uttermost farthing. In these journeys the Masters had opportunities of making minute inquiries into the condition of the districts through which they passed ; but even while resident at Marienberg their means of information appear to have been greatly superior to those of most governments of the period. As early as the end of the fourteenth century, they had established a regular post from one Teutonic House to another over the whole extent of Prussia ; and it was the duty of every House-Commander, when the Post arrived, to provide a fresh man and horse, and forward it on its destination with as little delay as possible ; marking, at the same time, on the cover of every packet the times of its arrival and departure, so that it could be immediately perceived where any delay had occurred.

Every government office, as well as those for the administration of the immediate affairs of the Order, was filled gratuitously by one of the brethren, who could, as long as the rules were maintained, have little motive for corruption, as he could hold no personal property. What was strictly necessary was already furnished to him ; whatever exceeded this could be at once taken from him, as soon as he was known to possess it. For the same reason it appears that there could be no inducement to intrigue to obtain offices which afforded no profit ; and the appointment, which lay always in the hands of the Master and the Chapter, must have been regulated mostly by considerations of capability : the vow of obedience, which every Teutonic brother had taken, of course prevented any one from declining any for which he was deemed fit. The court and numerous household of the Master, as a sovereign, stood on an entirely different footing ; every member receiving a salary for his services, and never belonging to the Order at all.

In their various relations with their subjects, the Masters of Prussia often appear, however, in a still more



pleasing light than when surrounded by the pomp and circumstance of their princely state ; or, when divested of these, in the stern and sombre simplicity of the convent. On their journeys they seem to have been, at least during the better days of the Order, received by all classes, especially the lower, with marks of respect and attachment. On the news of their approach to any town, the people usually came out in crowds to meet them, with singers and musicians, and all the scholars that could be mustered, to bid them welcome ; and they were not dismissed without kind words and liberal donations. The sort of presents sometimes brought to the Masters, on these occasions, and the persons by whom they were offered, also bear strong testimony to the friendliness of their relations with their subjects ; sometimes it is an old man who brings some hazel nuts, because he hears the Master likes them ; sometimes a little boy with an offering of a few pears, or a poor woman with a bunch of lilies. Sometimes, when the Master stopped to pass the night in the town, the young girls would come and dance under his windows, and never departed without an acknowledgment of his good will. The poor and the sick in the hospitals were never forgotten ; and poor scholars, little orphan girls, and poor and aged Prussians, Lithuanians, and Russians, many of whom were scattered about in the Masters' dominions, are mentioned as objects of their especial bounty. On Easter eve, troops of young people would come from the town of Marienberg to the castle ; and, surrounding the Master in his walks in the garden, imprison him in a frolicksome manner until he should ransom himself by a small present : and at weddings and christenings also, especially those of converted heathens, liberal donations were made. We find such items as "forty ells of blue and red cloth, to make dresses for some baptized Lithuanians and their wives," and four tons of mead to be drunk on the same joyful occasion. A Jew, however, we may observe, on whom the rite was performed at the same time, received only half a mark.

Besides these, many special acts of charity are noted ; sums bestowed for the rebuilding of houses that had been burnt, for sowing again a district whose crops had been

destroyed by hail, for replacing farming cattle that had been drowned, &c.

Among the good works of the Teutonic Order in Prussia must also be remembered the many wise laws passed for the encouragement of trade and agriculture, and for the better administration of justice, as well as the establishment of schools, one for every sixty families, and educational institutions of a higher order at Königsberg and Marienberg. In every Teutonic house resided experienced, if not learned, physicians, and Prussia rose during the rule of the Order into high reputation for wisdom ; journeys were often made thither, solely for the purpose of acquiring knowledge, or of bringing some important dispute for decision to Marienberg.

For many years after the establishment of the Masters at Marienberg, the Order manifested only signs of ever-increasing prosperity, strength, and splendour. To a more attentive observation, however, this period appears as the culminating point whence, after a short space, we may date the commencement of its decline. Its whole inward meaning had found an outward expression ; its spirit had clothed itself in material form ; it had become, in the language of our day a "great fact ;" it had done, perhaps, all that it was capable of doing ; probably it no longer heartily believed in the divinity of its mission ; its real occupation was gone ; and, like all earthly things, when it had finished its work, it had to depart.

It was not long before, in spite of all external appearances of florid health, there were symptoms of internal disease. We find the Master complaining, in the Chapter, of the irregular and careless performance of the services of the church ; of the knights having, in violation of their vow, money and valuables in their possession : and enjoining for the future a more strict observance of the rules of the Order. The knights who wish to take a journey of pleasure are to be content with two horses ; and not to affect the vanity of costly foreign armour and weapons, but to be satisfied with what is common in the country. Those who remain lying in bed, when they ought to be at the early services in the Church, are to be put on an allowance of bread and water ; and no

brother is, without permission, to leave the house to drink and feast with worldly men. Since respect for the priests begins apparently to fail, the Master will try what an additional title bestowed upon them will do; they shall be called "*Chorherrn*." The brothers of the noblest rank are also to enjoy a similar distinction; and those of humble birth—we cannot see why—are no longer to be eligible to the highest offices, unless in cases of very remarkable merit.

Not many years after the holding of this Chapter, the castle of Marienberg became the scene of a crime so fearful that it had not even been contemplated as possible in the code of the Order. A certain knight, Johann von Endorf, who had often been reprimanded, and even punished, for his irregular and immoral conduct, came to the Master to request his permission to join a warlike expedition, then preparing against the wild Lithuanians. Since, however, he had yet manifested no sign of amendment, the Master judged that his motive was, not so much a holy zeal against the infidels, as a wish to withdraw himself, amid the tumult of the war, from the strict discipline and vigilant superintendence to which he was subjected at Marienberg. It was replied, therefore, that "he who would engage in such a contest must first prepare himself by repentance, by exercise in good works, and by leading a blameless life: that his (Johann von Endorf's) soul was yet in no wise prepared for death." He was also told that, even if the Master had been inclined to grant the permission, there was no horse that could be spared for him. This was an unskilful move on the part of the Master, for the last objection was more easily answered. Von Endorf immediately procured two good horses, and ventured to renew his request. It was again refused, and now with some severity: as he had no right to send for the horses without leave, it was said, they should be taken away from him: and in this resolution the Master remained firm. The knight withdrew, burning with suppressed rage, uttering curses "not loud, but deep," went secretly into the town of Marienberg, and bought a long knife, "such as men used for cutting up fish." As he was moving rapidly away, the dealer called after him to ask if

he would not take the sheath ; but the knight replied "I will find for it the costliest sheath in Prussia." Concealing the knife under his mantle, he returned to the castle. It was late in the evening ; and, in crossing the court, he perceived that the Master's chapel was illuminated, and knew by this that the Master was alone there, engaged in prayer. The brethren were assembled at vespers in the church ; even the immediate attendants of the Master had withdrawn, as they were accustomed to do while he was thus employed : and the knight moved stealthily into the entrance of the chapel, and concealed himself in a dark corner. At length, when the Master had finished his devotions, and, advancing towards the spot, had turned to enter the door that led to his apartments, Von Endorf rushed forward, and plunged the knife into his breast, saying, "Take, then, if thou wilt, what belongs to me." The Master sunk on the floor, when the assassin snatched the knife again, and plunged it once more into the heart of his victim. He then left the spot ; but was followed by the barking of a little dog belonging to the Master, and betrayed by his blood-besprinkled garments.

Some difficulty occurred in the disposal of the criminal ; for as spiritual persons, the Teutonic knights could not put any offender to death, and it was not thought advisable to give over a brother of the Order, for judgment to any other tribunal. Such a crime as the murder of the Master, the Father of the Order, had never, in its laws, been contemplated as even possible, so that no punishment was assigned to it ; and it was therefore finally determined, with the concurrence of the pope, that the assassin should be imprisoned for life.

At the Chapter held for the election of a Master in 1352 the debates were stormy, and the jealousies and animosities among the brethren greater than had ever been known. Apparently there was little chance of their coming to a decision ; but, on the contrary they were verging fast towards fierce and open quarrel, when suddenly an awful voice was heard to issue from the tombs of the deceased Masters, commanding them to elect one Winrich von Kniprode, at least so it was understood, and

warning them that the Order was tottering in consequence of their dissensions. "*Winrice! Winrice! Ordo vacillat;*" thus spake the warning voice, and the knights had still good faith enough to put an end at once to their disputes, and obey its behests.

Then, indeed, came jovial days. For more than a week after the inauguration, the castle of Marienberg resounded with mirth and revelry; and between sixty and seventy guests of illustrious rank came to join in the celebration. Festivals and banquets followed one another in rapid succession. The first day was devoted to feasting and toping in the grand hall; the second to a shooting-match, at which the Master himself carried off the first prize. In the evening there was dancing, and the Father opened the ball with the beautiful Maria von Alfleben: and there were three pipers from Frankfurt on the Maine; and wandering minstrels, and a Meister singer from Nurnberg, who delighted the company with praises of the god Bacchus; and the High Master especially was so taken with the song, that he bestowed in requital a golden beaker on the singer: six pipes of costly wine, sent by the rich city of Dantzic, flowing freely all the while. Then a Prussian, inspired either by wine or patriotism, or the sight of the costly present, ventured to sing, not the praises of the god Bacchus, but the valiant deeds of his forefathers. This theme, however, proved by no means so acceptable to the company; and the poor Prussian was put off with a sorry jest, and a covered dish which, when opened, was found to contain a hundred bad nuts!

On the third day come envoys from the principal cities to bring presents and their homage to the new High Master. Dantzic sends six golden dishes; Culm a silver chest, with a piece of Noah's ark (!); the Marienbergers offer a suit of costly steel armour inlaid with gold; and so forth. The presents are displayed for three days, six knights keeping watch by them. At the banquet that follows, a vast beaker goes round, containing according to the accounts, *eight bottles*, which each guest is expected to empty; and one jolly fellow, Veit von Bassenheim, demands to have it filled a third time; and the knights "kept it up" for eight days together. Plea-

sant doings these, that would have somewhat surprised that "pious unknown German" at Jerusalem, and those who watched with him beside the sick pilgrims, and sowed the seed now waving in such rank luxuriance.

The knights are no longer willing even to be called "brothers;" for are they not knights or nobles? why should they not rather bear the title of "Kreuzherrn" (Lords of the Cross)? The High Master reminds them that it is their vocation to lead a brotherly and holy life, but the nobles carry the day. It is to be feared they have now climbed high enough to be growing giddy. In the next reign, the High Master has need of 500,000 marks, and attempts to impose a property-tax, a poll-tax, and excise duties, to which even the clergy are to be amenable; but town and country unite in opposition to him, declaring they will rather lose all they have, and their lives into the bargain, than pay. By some means, however, Wallenrode appears to have got the money; for in 1395, he advanced to prosecute the war in Lithuania, taking with him an army of upwards of 40,000 men, besides 18,000 of the Order.

Upon an island not far from Kauen he held his renowned "table of honour;" and on both shores stood crowds gazing at the spectacle. The curtains of the tents were withdrawn; the sun played and glittered on the armour and weapons, and the dazzling lustre was increased by a golden screen held before each of the twelve illustrious guests. The meal began at nine in the morning, and lasted till two in the afternoon: fifty dishes, and all kinds of rare and costly wines, covered the table; all the vessels and utensils were of gold or silver; and, moreover, every illustrious guest was at liberty to pocket whatever he pleased. During the repast, a herald proclaimed aloud the valiant and worthy deeds of each of the heroes. The Austrian knight of Richardsdorf had killed sixty Turks with his own hand; the knight of Buchwald had never refused anything that had been asked in the name of St. George; a count Robert of Wurtemberg had refused the imperial crown (though it does not seem certain that it was ever offered to him); and Wallenrode himself had renounced, for the sake of the Order, a beautiful bride.

Then followed some who appear to have been, like the famed duenna, "difficult to compliment," so that recourse must be had to their relations; there was a Scotch knight whose *father* had lost his life in the defence of his king; a margrave Frederick of Meissen, whose *family* had always been friendly to the Order, &c. After all these doings, it does not seem surprising that the army was suddenly fallen upon by the enemy; and 30,000 of that proud host were left on the field. The master, Wallenrode, who had left the army besieging Wilna, fell into deep melancholy, and died "without the blessing of the church, and without receiving the last sacrament." It was during his reign that the jealousies long existing between the Order and the clergy reached a great height. Wallenrode is said to have called himself "the friend of God, but the enemy of priests;" and to have declared his conviction that one priest was enough for any country, and that that one ought to be kept in a cage, and only let out when one wanted him to perform his office. Another symptom, this, that the stately tree was becoming unsound at the core. One who could think and speak thus of priests, had, at all events, no business at the head of a monastic order. It is likely, however, that the sins of this Wallenrode have been exaggerated; for he is accused of all manner of heresies, and he gave up the ghost, according to the chronicles, somewhat in the Don Juan style, "in the name of all the devils," while the heavens testified their anger in thunder, lightning, and hail.

By some accounts he would seem to have been attacked by hydrophobia, as he is said to have suffered much from internal fever,—“a perpetual burning fire within,” and to have bit people like a mad dog.\* The account of the terrible tempest that took place in the hour of his death is likely enough to be true; for that summer of 1395 had been in Prussia a most disastrous one. The Vistula and the Nogat had burst their boundaries, overflowed the rich lowlands, and drowned the most flourishing villages, with

\* Ihn Gott plagete inwendig mit dem laufenden Feuer, der ward unsinnig und biss sich mit den Hunden.—*Gerstenberger's Chronicles of Marienberg.*

their verdant meadows and bounteous fields of waving corn.

This Wallenrode, we find, was the first who proclaimed himself "We, by the grace of God;" and the pride and pomp which he displayed, and which he attempted to support by a greatly increased taxation, tended much to alienate the affections of all men from the Order, against which many enemies, Lithuanians, Russians, Poles, and Tartars, were now combining.

But no human wisdom could have very long delayed its downfall, for a new chapter of the world's history had begun; "the ages of chivalry were past;" with the great discoveries that had been made with the invention of gunpowder, with the new direction taken by commerce a new world had arisen; and a society so exclusive—cut off from all the ties of domestic duty and affection, with all the means of luxurious indulgence—could not but become corrupt as soon as peace should afford leisure for enjoyment. The institution had now no real object or purpose to fulfil; it could not go forward, and must, therefore, inevitably go down, for nothing in this world can long remain stationary. The vessel was aground; and even though no storms had come, the waves of time must have beaten upon it till it went to pieces. But storms did come. In the great battle of Tanneberg, in which three of the nations above mentioned were united against them, forming an army of 160,000 men, 40,000 of the troops of the Order were left on the field; and its internal state was too unsound for it ever to recover the blow.

The Teutonic Order is the only one of the monastic-military orders that has left lasting traces of its existence in the civilization of a great nation, which must probably without it have been retarded for hundreds of years. Its astonishing energy raised Prussia within a brief space to a position superior to that of all the surrounding states. In the dominions of the Order no fist-law robbed the merchant of the fruits of his industry; no feudal anarchy brought forth the monstrous remedy of a Secret Tribunal; and the freedom of the knights from family ties had at least one advantage, that the country they ruled was not, like so many others, torn to pieces in



family quarrels. During the greater part of its reign, money was abundant enough in the coffers of the Order; for, while its regulations were only moderately observed, its expenses must have been trifling compared with its resources. The arts flourished under its rule; and even learning, however unpromising the first literary attempts of the valiant knights appear to have been. In 1451, we hear of Pope Nicolaus V. sending to Prussia to purchase MS. books for the Vatican; and the cathedrals of Culm, of Dantzic, Marienberg itself, and hundreds of towns and castles, testify what was done by them for public and domestic architecture and the sister arts. In times when kings and nations trembled at the thunders of the Vatican, the Teutonic Order knew how to maintain its position—without defiance, without subjection; no undutiful son of the church, nor yet the slave of either pope or emperor.

“If you are summoned before me,” said a grumbling Cæsar one day to an ambassador of the Order, “you say you stand under the pope; and if he asks anything of you, you tell him you belong to the empire.” The sagacious envoy replied, with a diplomatic evasion, “The Order is subject to the church, the councils, and the empire.”

As we are only considering a few phases of the life of former days, and are not engaged with a history of the Order, or of the country it governed, we are not bound to follow the changes which took place gradually in the character of its government, or the decline of morals and discipline in the Order itself. Its rule became, as might have been expected, sterner and more tyrannical in proportion to the enfeeblement of all ties of religion or duty in the governing body. As discontents among their subjects become deeper and more widely spread, the lives of the knights become ever gayer and more luxurious. The brethren are famous all over Europe for their passionate addiction to falconry, for the perfection to which they have brought the sport, and the lavish expense bestowed on the schools of falconry they have established; hither come falconers from the most distant countries to study the art; trained hawks from Prussia are welcome presents to monarchs, and are sent to the courts of England,

France, Austria, and elsewhere. A master attempting measures of reform enacts that a knight shall not keep more than ten horses, a commander not more than a hundred; subsequently, that no contracts are binding but such as are concluded during the "sober hours of the morning." Balls are now in the order of the day at Marienberg; and at one of these a jester, now a regular appendage to the court of the master, tosses an image of the Virgin into the castle ditch, asking, "Why she does not come to the ball, like other girls?"

It would be a sad and not very profitable task to examine the detail of the various sins of which the knights in the course of time came to be accused, and of which, doubtless, they were often guilty; to trace the progress of decay in a once noble form, from which life had evidently departed, and which, long before the secularization in 1525, required only decent burial.\*

The Teutonic brethren, amongst whom were once numbered many true Christian heroes, have long since gone to their account.

"The knights are dust, their good swords rust,  
Their souls are with the saints, we trust;"

and the land they ruled has become subject to a bureaucracy.

Marienberg, the stupendous, the beautiful, the "castle of castles," as it has been called, the most striking memorial left of this strange institution, and of some of the most peculiar features of the age in which it arose, suffered much from time, but more from the neglect and barbarism of man.† Its noble halls were converted, during the eighteenth century, into barracks and warehouses, into magazines for straw and hay, and, by means of wooden partitions, into lodgings and workshops.

\* The motive of Albrecht of Brandenburg in this act is quite a different question; it is evident that he violated the oath he had taken for a direct personal advantage.

† The castle has since been to a certain extent restored; and on this occasion, the peasants of the neighbourhood voluntarily undertook the considerable labour of clearing the tombs and vaults from the rubbish with which they had become filled.

Within its vast echoing chambers, serjeants drilled their recruits, schoolmasters wielded their birchen sceptres, and weavers plied their shuttles. The beautiful painted ceilings were blackened with the smoke of rancid oil lamps; the marble columns lay shattered in the ditches; the stately mausoleum of the high masters and their knights became choked with rubbish; the mighty Order to which it owed its existence had vanished, faded into an empty sound,—a title of the Emperor of Austria. “*Sic transit gloria.*”—“So fades, so languishes, grows dim and dies, all that this world is proud of.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

### BEFORE THE WAR.

THE peasant war of Germany in the sixteenth century, until lately deemed worthy of so little notice, is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable phenomena of the age in which it occurred; whether we regard the extent of its influence, for the movement spread in a few weeks with fiery rapidity from the frontiers of France to the Carpathians,—or the numbers engaged in it, for in Franconia alone it cost the lives of more than 50,000 peasants, without counting their opponents; or the motives and impulses from which it sprang, for it was the outburst of the deepest feelings of humanity, from the pressure of long-endured and intolerable wrong.

It has been common, however, in estimating popular insurrections, to look rather at the amount of success which has attended them, than at the motives in which they originated. What was a crime if followed by defeat, becomes a heroism if crowned by victory; and thus, while the effort of the Swiss to throw off the Austrian yoke has been consecrated to all time as a glorious struggle in the cause of liberty, one which, in the beginning at least, was fully as worthy of our sympathy, has been regarded with

cold indifference or careless condemnation: one historian,\* in speaking of the peasant war, says, "It originated in a hatred to the nobility and clergy;" and then, as if he had reduced the thing to its ultimate elements, and that hatred to nobility and clergy were an original principle of human nature, beyond which our inquiries need not and cannot go, he makes no attempt to proceed further in investigating its cause.

Even Robertson, in the page and a half which is nearly all he has given to the subject (little more space than he has devoted to the insane fancies of Joanna of Castile), speaks in the same tone. "Being led by persons of the lowest rank, all their exploits were distinguished by a brutal and unmeaning fury." Whether, as it seems to be here implied, their "brutal fury" was in any degree to be attributed to their low rank is a question we shall be able to answer when we see what was the conduct of persons of noble rank towards them. Recent investigations have also afforded convincing proofs that in the beginning of the contest the peasants manifested astonishing moderation; even their enemies have partly acknowledged the reasonableness of their demands, and the patience with which they awaited the result of long negotiations for the redress of their grievances by legal methods, and of delays interposed with no other view than that of giving time to assemble forces against them. In the whole passage there is, perhaps, less attention to fact than might have been expected from so high an authority, or than probably would have been given had not "persons of the lowest rank" been in question. Had 50,000 nobles perished in a struggle for liberty, the world would have rung from end to end with sympathy and admiration. "Their grievances multiplying continually," continues the historian, "they ran to arms in the year 1526, with the most frantic rage. . . . Wherever they came, they plundered the monasteries, wasted the lands of their superiors, razed their castles, and massacred without mercy all persons of noble birth, who were so unfortunate as to fall into their hands. Having intimidated their oppressors, as they imagined, by the violence of

\* Kohlrausch, in his "History of Germany."

their proceedings, they began to consider what would be the most effectual method of securing themselves from their tyrannical exactions. With this view they drew up and published a memorial containing all their demands; and declared that, while arms were in their hands, they would either persuade or oblige the nobles to give them full satisfaction." From the original documents, preserved mostly in the royal archives at Stuttgart, it appears that it was not in the year 1526, but in the very beginning of the year 1525, that the whole country was in a state of open insurrection; that the peasants by no means began by plundering monasteries, razing castles, &c., and then bethought themselves of endeavouring to obtain by peaceful methods the redress of their wrongs; but it was not till they had repeatedly tried every method of legal redress open to them, that they took up arms in absolute despair of any other remedy. It was, indeed, a mere measure of self-defence; for if after venturing on so bold a step as meeting publicly to remonstrate with their lords, the serfs had returned separately to their homes, it would have been to expose themselves to inevitable destruction. Again, it was so far from being their usual practice to "massacre all persons of noble birth who were so unfortunate as to fall into their hands," that it does not appear that they ever did so, deliberately, in more than one instance; namely, at Weinsperg, where about twenty nobles were put to death, by what was then a common military punishment, after the town had been taken by storm, and the distinct warning had been given that such would be the case if it were not surrendered.

Even this also was the act, not of the whole body of peasants, but of a very small number; and the very outcry it occasioned, and the manner in which the memory of the deed has been preserved as of a quite unheard-of atrocity, is a sufficient proof that the case must have been a rare one.

If we compare this, confessedly the worst of their acts, with the treatment of the peasants by the nobles when they fell into their hands, we shall see with what justice, the "frantic rage" has been represented as peculiarly on the side of the serfs.

The peasant war, though not occupying in the whole more than six months, arose from causes that stretch far back into the grey dawn of modern history, and was the result of the accumulated wrongs of many ages.

The reduction of a once free people to such a state of servitude as that in which we find the peasantry of Germany, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, was not, of course, effected without resistance. The flame was trampled down, but not yet extinguished, and throughout the German empire, as well as in almost every country in Europe, terrible insurrections had, from time to time, written in characters of blood the fierce protest of humanity against the outrages to which it had been subjected.

It does not appear, however, that the governing classes had ever been led to any reflections on the causes of these occurrences; they regarded them as they would a storm or a hurricane, or any other outbreak of wild elementary forces, which, when they were once past, it was of no use to think about. If any conjecture on their causes is ever hazarded, they are usually attributed to the too great prosperity and comfort of the common people, rendering them presumptuous and insolent! It was in the remote and secluded districts, the mountains of Switzerland and Carinthia, and the marshes of the Lower Elbe and Rhine, that the people had longest maintained their independence, and where first began the series of revolts which preluded the most important of all the peasant wars, that of the sixteenth century. One of the last spots in which freedom found a refuge was a little tract of land between the Eider and the Elbe, hemmed in by sea and marsh, where dwelt a race of peasants of the old German stock, who scarcely acknowledged themselves subjects, even to the Empire, and paid no tax or tribute to any one on earth, except a small rent to the Bishop of Bremen. The Counts of Stade, however, who dwelt on the borders of their country, had long looked enviously on the condition of these free Dittmarshians; and at length built two strong castles, and commenced the same system of oppression which had been so successful elsewhere, and with the same result.

About the year 1140 a great flood had overwhelmed the whole country, and this was followed by a winter so long and severe that "the very birds in the air were frozen and fell dead on the ground." In the year after this provisions were so dear and scarce that men and cattle died in great misery. The people of Dittmarsh, therefore, besought the Count to release them from the obligation of bringing in the quantity of corn which they now paid as tribute; but instead of releasing them, the Count declared that he had this time need of more corn than he had ever had before; and this was the reason why:—

The Count had one day invited a great man, the lord of a neighbouring castle, to visit him, and had amused him with harping and minstrelsy. Thereupon, the great man in return invited the Count; and the entertainment he provided, albeit in form belonging to his day and not to ours, yet in spirit was much the same as most of us may have had occasion to remark, even in London city in 1846. He built up in his hall mighty heaps of sacks of corn, and then he made his cows, and his calves, and his horses, and his oxen, and his sheep, and his pigs, pass in review before his guests, in order to astonish and awe them by the amount of his riches. The Countess of Stade was piqued at being outdone in this manner, and being a stern woman, urged her Count to take more violent measures than ever to compel the peasants to make up the yawning deficit in the granaries and storehouses. What the Count did is not recorded; but on the appointed day, the waggons laden with corn were seen slowly wending their way towards the castle gate; and lo! on the top of one was seen the daughter of a boor, a fair maiden much admired by the Count, and to whom he had paid many attentions, after the fashion in which, in the twelfth century, nobles were wont to compliment maids of low degree. By the side of this waggon her father trudged along, one followed closely upon another, and the castle gates were thrown wide to admit the goodly store, when suddenly a signal was given, "Up and be doing, and open the sacks of corn;" and forth from beneath the sacks sprang up strong armed-men, who rushed into the castle, and bore down all before them. The Countess fled from her pursuers, and met her

death either from their weapons, or in the waters of the neighbouring river. The Count took refuge in one of the inner chambers, where he might have remained concealed, but that a tame magpie with which he was accustomed to amuse himself, flew after him and betrayed his hiding-place. He was dragged forth and stabbed, his castle razed to the ground, and for this time the peasants were victorious.

But they were now declared enemies of the empire, another strong castle was built in place of the one they had destroyed, and they were subjected to heavy impositions. But again, in 1164, they attacked this castle, and drove out the garrison, whom, it is said in the old chronicle, they terrified by the same stratagem as that employed by Malcolm's army against the castle of Macbeth. The lord of the castle was absent, reported to have been slain in the wars against the heathen Prussians; and those left in charge of it having, we may suppose, never heard of this ingenious device, shrieked out that the woods were coming down upon them, and fled in dismay.

Many were the struggles of the Dittmarshians; and their land was often wasted, even their wives and children, when taken, were burnt as heretics and rebels; but it was not till nearly a hundred years after, that a crusade was preached against them, and an army of forty thousand fully-armed soldiers proved too strong for eleven thousand peasants. They came to battle not far from Bremen; and though the peasants were successful in the first onslaught, they were finally overpowered. Six thousand of them were left dead on the field, many plunged into the Weser, some flew to their neighbours the Frieslanders, and grey-haired old men, women, and children, were seen fighting before their burning huts. Of prisoners there is no mention; nothing appears to have been left alive but the flocks and herds, and the land was parcelled out among priests and nobles. From this time, almost without cessation, there occur, now here now there, continual petty revolts, which were in almost all cases fruitless; for without mutual knowledge or co-operation, the peasants of each separate district were easily subdued, and the failure of



each attempt, of course, made the succeeding one more hopeless. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, many causes had contributed to aggravate the miseries of the peasantry; and the success of the Swiss Confederacy, and the prosperity of the free cities, had naturally led to bitter comparisons with their own condition. Their frequent insurrections, too, had led their rulers to look with a suspicious eye on popular meetings, and the liberty they had hitherto enjoyed in this respect was daily reduced within narrower limits.

Fairs, weddings, archery meetings, even pilgrimages and church wakes, where the serf might relieve his heart by complaint, and enjoy a momentary forgetfulness of his wrongs, were restrained and opposed as much as possible, and this at a time when, amongst other classes of society, pleasure and luxury were carried to an extent hitherto unknown.

The mode of life of the German nobility had been, in former times, extremely simple. Their own lands yielded almost every article required in their primitive house-keeping; the flax and wool furnished by their people were spun and woven at home by the women of the family; and there was little need of money for anything but horses and armour; so that as they had mostly enough for their wants, there was not much temptation to push their rights over the peasants to their most injurious extent. The great impulse that had recently been given to commerce had now, however, led to the introduction of the produce and the enjoyments of the most distant countries, and the industry of the German manufacturing classes had been proportionably stimulated. Carpets, costly stuffs, vessels of gold and silver, sweet wines, oil, and spices, were brought from Italy; and sugar, almonds, and figs, high as was their price, found their way even to the tables of citizens of the middle class. People who had formerly been content with salt only as a condiment, we are told, now required cloves, cinnamon, nutmegs, and other luxuries, from the East. To the citizen, however, the increase of wealth often kept pace with the increase of wants: but with the noble it was otherwise; for as he

had been taught to despise agriculture as an occupation fit only for slaves and serfs, he had no means of increasing the produce of his lands, and where he did not take to highway robbery, as he often did, had few other resources than to increase his demands upon his unfortunate peasants. If he attempted to raise money by way of loan, he was in most instances egregiously cheated by Jews and others, who of course indemnified themselves for their frequent losses by charging an exorbitant rate of interest when they could get it; ten and even twenty per cent. being far from uncommon.

The invention of gunpowder had added to the difficulties of the nobles by greatly increasing the expense of fortifying their castles, and at the same time it tended to dry up one source of their emolument, namely that of military service; for it was found that foot soldiers were often more useful, and beyond comparison cheaper, than the knights. Yet, with all this want of money, nothing would have been regarded as more unworthy of the noble than a careful and frugal regard to his expenditure, and many a one took particular pride in declaring himself to be

———“Ein edles Blut,  
Das wenig hat, und viel verthut;”

or in other words, a gallant fellow who “spends half-a-crown out of sixpence a-day.”

In the fifteenth century too the expenses of dress had increased to an extent almost incredible. Wealthy citizens, compelled on many occasions to submit to a mortifying inferiority to the nobles, were naturally disposed to vie with them in the showiness of their appearance; and on state occasions ruffled in silk, satin, and velvet mantles lined with ermine and other expensive furs, knives and swords inlaid with silver, gold rings, and chains, and jewels.

Among the sumptuary laws which vainly attempted to restrain the torrent of finery, we find caps and swords embroidered with gold and jewels, pearl bandeaus for the hair, and richly wrought veils, “the border of which should not contain more than an ounce of pure gold,” in the list of the articles allowed to the wives and daughters

of wealthy burghers. Knights and dames of high degree were, of course, not content to be outshone by their inferiors, and they had no other means of meeting these expenses than that of wringing the last farthing from their unhappy serfs, or the before-mentioned resource of highway robbery, which, perhaps, was the honester process of the two.

Greater than all other grievances of the lower classes, however, was the corrupt state of the church. There are few earthly sufferings that men cannot bear, as long as they can keep bright their hopes of heaven; but now the guides that were to conduct them thither, had all too palpably lost their own way. The clergy no longer stood between the people and their oppressors, but were themselves become a bye-word for pride, and luxury, and tyranny; the cities being accustomed, in the management of their affairs, to depend on their own judgment as men of business must, were not easily dazzled by pretension, but inclined to trust to the decisions of that judgment all questions that came before them, and could not be made to understand why it was desirable that the successors of the Apostles, and the followers of a crucified Saviour, who had "not where to lay his head," should revel in princely pomp and magnificence; they were apt to point to the clergy as to a mere splendidly paid class of idlers; prophets were fortelling in many places the downfall of the mighty structure whose foundation was obviously unsound; and the sky was reddened with the dawn of the Reformation—a bright dawn, alas! to be so soon shrouded in gloom and tempest—to fulfil so few of the high hopes that it awakened!

The peasantry were, of course, the class who suffered most from the corruption of the church, as from every other social evil. We hear no more, as in the early ages, of those pious men and women whose virtues made a sunshine in a thousand shady places, and whose example dignified the humblest labours of the toiling serf. Monks and nuns are counted by tens of thousands; but it is well now mostly, if they are only idle and useless. The contempt with which lords and princes look down on the class by whose toil they live, is equalled, or some say

exceeded, by the pride and arrogance of the churchmen: instead of being themselves like the "poor people," boors, or bauers, as they were called, that is, cultivators of the soil, they regarded such merely as the nobles did—as a property to be disposed of at their pleasure, and for their advantage. For the earnest devout prayers and vigils of saints and hermits, to whom, at least, the people looked with reverence, there was now an ever-increasing accumulation of mystical symbolical ceremonies, of changes of food and clothes, of bowings and crossings, of playing with images and wax-lights, ashes, and palms, and bells, to which often scarcely the most fantastic meaning could be affixed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DRUMMER OF NIKLASHAUSEN.

FRANCONIA, the greater part of which is now included in the not very extensive kingdom of Bavaria, was, at the time of the peasant war, divided into four ecclesiastical states, namely, the bishoprics of Wurzburg, Bamberg, Eichstadt, and the great estates belonging to the order of Teutonic knights; also into the Margravates of Anspach and Baireuth, the counties of Henneberg, Schwarzenberg, Hohenlohe, Wertheim, Erbach, Reineck, Castel, and Limburg, and the Imperial cities of Nurnberg, Schweinfurt, Rothenburg, Weissenberg, and Windsheim, with their respective territories. It was, nevertheless, the smallest of the circles of the empire, though excelling them all in fertility, and most of them in beauty. The valley of the Maine, which flows through it, is so rich in vineyards that it has been said it alone might furnish wine to all Germany, and the river also opens for it a communication with the Rhine, Holland, and the ocean, by which it might receive the produce of all other lands. Towards the north, where the hills of Thuringia and the Pine

Mountains are less productive, its comparative barrenness is compensated by its riches in minerals and wood. It is, in short, as a German writer says, "a beautiful and blessed land" ("*ein schöne gesegetes Land*"); yet here it was that the peasantry were suffering the greatest extremities of want and oppression, and here began the first of the series of revolts that preceded the great outbreak of 1525. It was in the year 1476, that a shepherd lad of Wurzburg, named Hans Boheim, but commonly known as Hans the drummer, or the piper, for he was in the habit of playing on both instruments at weddings, church festivals, and such occasions, began to meditate on all that he saw and heard, "to see visions and dream dreams;" and one day—it was about the time of Mid Lent—there appeared to him no less a person than the glorious "Queen of heaven" herself. The life he had hitherto led now appeared profane and sinful; he burnt his drum in the presence of the people, and began to preach to them to repent of their sins, "for the kingdom of Heaven was at hand," and he commanded them at the same time to lay aside all costly attire, cords of silk and silver, pointed-toed shoes, and all manner of vanity. The people hearkened to the new prophet, and great numbers came every holiday flocking to Niklashausen to hear him. Soon he enlarged his theme. The Blessed Virgin, he said, "had not only commanded him to preach the renunciation of all the pomps and vanities of the world, but likewise to announce the speedy abolition of all existing authorities; there should be no lords spiritual or temporal, neither prince nor pope, neither king nor kaiser; but all should be as brothers; that all taxes and tributes, tithes and dues, should be done away with: and wood, and water, spring and meadow, be free to all men."

It was the dream of many weary hearts in that poor down-trodden multitude, and they could not but throb high at such glad tidings. From all the neighbouring villages and hamlets on the Tauber, from the distant Odenwald, and the valleys of the Maine and Neckar, nay, from the banks of the Rhine, from Swabia and Bavaria, came pilgrims of both sexes and all ages. Mechanics ran from their workshops, peasant boys from the plough,

maids from the reaping-field with the sickles in their hands, without leave asked, came trooping in to hear the new Evangel.

They had made no provision for their journey ; but those who had, gave to those who needed, mostly without pay ; and all were furnished with food and drink, addressing each other as "brother and sister."

For months together, on all Sundays and holidays, was heard the voice of the holy youth, the "messenger of our Lady," as he was called, sounding from his pulpit—a tub turned upside down ; and as yet, notwithstanding all that he had said and done, in perfect harmony with the parish priest. Two nobles even are named as having been among his hearers,—the knight, Sir Kunz of Thunfeld and his son. Gifts began to pour in,—rich gifts in money, and jewels, and clothes, and peasant women who had nothing else to give, made offerings of their long hair. Forty thousand worshippers of the Virgin were collected around Niklashausen : booths and tents were erected to supply them with necessities, though at night they had to lie in the gardens, or on the open fields. The enthusiasm rose ever higher ; but the priests now began to discover that they were playing with edge tools, and to hint that Hans Boheim dealt in the black art ; that his inspiration was of the devil ; and that the said devil it was, and no other, who had appeared to him in the white robes of the blessed Virgin, and had prompted this ungodly rebellion against temporal and ecclesiastical authority. But the hearts of men were on fire, and this feeble sprinkling only made them burn the fiercer. They flung themselves on their knees before the holy drummer, saying,—“O Man of God! messenger of Heaven! be gracious to us, and have pity on us;” and they tore and parted among them fragments of his garments, and he esteemed himself happy who could obtain but a thread of so precious a relic.

The Bishops of Mainz and Wurzburg and the Senate of Nuremberg looked askance at these doings, and forbade their subjects, under severe penalties, to go near Nicklashausen ; but threats, once formidable, seemed to have lost their power ; freedom from every yoke ! rest from every

burden!—there was magic in those sounds that nothing could resist. Matters seemed coming to a crisis. At length,—it was on St. Kilian's day,—Hans Boheim, after concluding his exhortation, invited, as was his custom, the faithful to assemble again on the following holiday, adding however the somewhat ominous injunctions, to leave their wives and children at home, to come towards evening and to come armed. Precisely what was intended cannot now be known ; but rumours of what had passed reached the ears of the Bishop, and he saw that no time was to be lost. The prophet, thoughtless seemingly of stratagems of war, was sleeping quietly enough, when, in the middle of the night, the house where he lay was surrounded by the bishop's men-at-arms, who bound him fast, placed him on a horse, and set off at full speed with him to Wurzburg.

In the morning the news spread consternation among the pilgrims ; the imprisonment of their prophet was a disheartening circumstance ; but above sixteen thousand of them undertook to follow him to Wurzburg, and set him free ; and after marching all night, they found themselves before the walls of the castle.

The Bishop sent down his marshal to know whence they came, and what they wanted ; the peasants in reply demanded that Hans Boheim should be given up to them ; if this were refused, they would deliver him by force. While they were speaking, some were seen to gather stones, and from the castle a few shots were fired at the peasants ; but the Bishop showed a wish to accommodate matters, and sent down one Conrad von Hutten, to tell them that the cause of their prophet should be subjected to judicial investigation ; and that if they would only go quietly home, and return to their duty, all would yet be well. These soft words, judiciously mingled when necessary with threats, began to produce their effect. The serfs were little used to this gentle conciliatory tone, and they began to melt away before its sunshine. Group after group slowly retired, scattering in different directions ; but the Bishop watched his opportunity, and when they had all peaceably turned their backs, he sent out his men-at-arms, who fell upon them,

and cut many down, and took many prisoners. Great numbers took refuge in a church; but threatened with fire and starvation, they at length surrendered. The prophet was burnt to death on a field near the castle of Wurzburg.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BROTHERS OF THE ORDER OF BREAD AND CHEESE.

THE smouldering fire next broke out in the Netherlands; but in this case the movement seemed to originate rather in sheer misery and hunger, than in any aspirations after political or religious reform.

The rich land had been laid waste by wars foreign and domestic, the trade of the cities crippled, the peasantry ground to the dust by the exactions of the soldiery, when some ill-advised financial operations of the Emperor Maximilian made the full cup overflow.

From the waste of enormous sums in warlike operations, money had become so scarce as to pass in some cases for as much as three times its original value, or even more, when suddenly the government hit on the expedient of filling its exhausted treasury by insisting that in the payment of taxes it should be taken only at the lowest value; as for instance, a gold *gulden* which passed commonly for sixty-three stivers, was to be reckoned at seventeen, and so on. The island of Texel and other places, which had been in arrear before, now declared they could not pay; not though they should "coin their hearts, and drop their blood for drachmas." They were suffering from famine too; for during the summer and autumn of 1490, it had rained so long and heavily, that the corn had rotted as it stood, and the common people thought themselves happy if they could appease the cravings of appetite with rape-seed, husks, and what had hitherto been reserved as food for cattle. In Leyden and other cities some provision was made for the poor, by a



weekly distribution of food ; but the country people had not even this resource. The Stadtholder declared, however, that their refusal to pay their taxes arose merely from obstinacy, which he was resolved to overcome by making an example of some of them, and accordingly, to be as good as his word, began by hanging two. Thereupon the peasants turned to bay ; if they must die, let it be rather with arms in their hands than by starvation or the executioner. A tumultuous crowd assembled, and dividing into two troops advanced upon Alkmaar and Hoorn ; the tax-gatherers fled precipitately, and the house of one among their number, a certain Niklas Korf who had made himself peculiarly obnoxious, was plundered and rased to the ground. They then took formal possession of the two cities, quartering themselves upon the inhabitants in military fashion, most of the wealthier citizens slipping away as well as they could. The leaders in this movement were Wilhelm Brederode a linen weaver, and "Anton, the son of William, bailiff of Bergen." These, as soon as they had disposed of their ragged regiment to the best of their ability, set off for Haarlem, with a troop of chosen men, and entering the town-house, where the council were assembled, and it appears without being very exact in the observance of complimentary etiquette, Wilhelm declared that he and his companions had taken arms for the redress of insupportable wrongs, and with a view of coming to a short reckoning with such men as Niklas Korf, who had not scrupled to follow, in his small way the example of fraud set by the government, by making cunning bargains with the people for his private benefit before making known the new ordinances. At the same time, Anton demanded permission to bring his followers into the city. This was refused, and for the present Anton returned quietly to Alkmaar, hinting however that perhaps he had a key that would open the gates of Haarlem.

The citizens and the aristocracy of the neighbourhood now sent off in great haste to the Governor at the Hague for assistance ; but no assistance was forthcoming, so there was no resource but to try conciliatory measures. A deputation was therefore dispatched to the insurgent

peasants at Alkmaar, which addressed them in the mildest terms, acknowledging the justice of their complaints, and beseeching them not to throw discredit on so good a cause by any act of violence. A General Diet was to be immediately assembled at the Hague, which would redress all wrongs by peaceable and legal methods. These soft words again found their way to the hearts of the rugged boors; they confided in the promises made to them, and agreed to lay down their arms and return to their homes—such homes as they had, if only those of their brethren who had been imprisoned for non-payment of taxes, might be released. Not only was this willingly conceded; but a general amnesty granted by the Governor for all that had taken place, as well as security from any new impositions, and the remission of all arrears. However it might be with coinage of gold and silver, promises at all events were not scarce, and they would still pass current with these credulous peasants. The great body of them dispersed to await in peace, though hungry and destitute, the decisions of the Diet, a small number was left to watch the progress of affairs in Alkmaar, but they do not appear to have interfered in any way with the citizens who returned to their homes and their private affairs.

But days, weeks, months passed away; the Diet had indeed assembled, but there was no talk of redressing the grievances of the peasants; nay, it seems the Governor had proposed to lay a new tax of two gold gulden upon every house, and he was in the mean while secretly assembling troops to punish the late insurrection. At Egmont Castle, near Alkmaar, messengers from the nobles residing in the city had met his officers, and agreed to admit them and their troops, at the hour of five in the afternoon. The plan was discovered by a priest friendly to the cause of the people, and immediately communicated to their leaders. In a few hours the whole country was in a flame. The Governor himself narrowly escaped paying the penalty of his treachery. From all the towns and villages of West Friesland and Kennemaar the inhabitants flocked to join the insurgents, and, meeting at Hoorn, were divided into troops and companies, and regularly organized, as far as circumstances would permit. Garrisons were placed in

Alkmaar and Hoorn, the castles of of Nieuwenberg and Middelburg rased to the ground, and a war of freedom proclaimed.

“ Away to heaven respective lenity,  
And fire-eye'd fury be our conduct now.”

The standard under which the people were to gather bore the picture of a saint, at whose feet lay a coarse barley loaf and a green cheese, as a symbol of their great need, and with how little they were willing to content themselves. Some wore a piece of bread and cheese, like an order, on their breasts, and none had made any further provision than this coarse food. They declared everywhere that they desired nothing more, and that for this only they were in arms. Simply not to die of hunger in a land bringing forth plenteously all the kindly fruits of the earth ! It was surely no very unreasonable request.

Messengers were now despatched to all parts of the country, summoning such of the peasants as had not yet joined them to do so immediately under certain penalties, and the tumultuous army, increasing at every step, rolled on until towards eight o'clock on a May evening they arrived before the gates of Haarlem. The gates were closed ; but when the peasants threatened to break in if they were not opened, the bailiff of the town and some other official personages made their appearance, and excused themselves by saying that they had not room for so many armed men, and hastened to the townhouse to call a council. What might have been the issue of their deliberations can never be known ; for before they were concluded, the gates were burst open, and the wild hordes poured into the streets. The town-house was attacked, and two or three persons especially hateful to the people dragged from it and put to death. The city also was plundered, but the insurgents do not appear to have carried their outrages further.

An attempt was made by about six thousand of them to get possession of Leyden in a similar manner ; but Count Egmont (the father of him who afterwards fell in the cause of freedom in the revolt of the Netherlands, under Philip the Second) threw himself with some troops

into the town, and the attack of the peasants was repulsed after a severe conflict. They afterwards encamped a few miles from Leyden ; but Egmont, taking advantage of some military errors committed by the peasants, who were, of course, ignorant enough of the trade of war, attacked them with a strong body of cavalry, and defeated them with great slaughter. The insurgents who had remained behind in Haarlem, attributed the defeat of their brethren principally to their want of cavalry, and they now despatched agents into the cities of the Netherlands to endeavour to hire about twelve hundred horse, who were to receive a month's pay in advance. The greater part of this number was got together, and brought as far as Utrecht ; but there it appeared that their agent had not money enough to fulfil his promise of a month's pay, and the soldiers thereupon turned round and went back again, with the exception of about two hundred, who by dint of great promises were induced to accompany him to Haarlem.

In the mean time, however, Count Egmont had invited Duke Albrecht of Saxony to join him with a considerable body of the Imperial troops under his command, and he advanced into the country, committing by the way far greater excesses than the insurgent peasants, in the moment of victory. The cattle belonging to the inhabitants was driven away ; towns plundered and churches burnt ; and a small town near Haarlem, into which a party of the peasants had thrown themselves, was taken by storm, and almost every creature in it put to the sword. Those in Haarlem, seeing the immense superiority of force brought against them, now began to deliberate upon the propriety of attempting to make terms ; but just as they had sent off messengers to Duke Albrecht with proposals to this effect, news came that five hundred well-armed citizens and peasants from Alkmaar, were hastening to their assistance, and they immediately gave up all thoughts of surrender, and resolved to try the event of a battle. An engagement accordingly took place near Heimskerk, which was longer and more doubtful in its issue than under the circumstances could have appeared possible ; but at length the superior discipline and military experience of the regular troops prevailed, and the peasants were routed

with severe loss. Two thousand of the men of Friesland, who had been coming to join them and had just landed, witnessed from a neighbouring dike the flight of their allies, and, hastily entering their vessels again, returned home.

There were now no peasants remaining in the town of Haarlem, and the citizens advanced to meet the Duke as he approached, and offered their keys with expressions of respect and submission ; but on entering the city the first order which he gave was for the erection of a scaffold and a gallows on the market-place ; and three of the insurgents who had been taken, were immediately beheaded, their heads placed upon poles, and their bodies bound upon the wheel. On the gallows were hung some citizens, who either had, or were supposed to have assisted the peasants to enter the town ; and the city was ordered to pay a fine of thirty-four thousand gold gulden, and to deliver up to the Duke all their charters and privileges, as well as all securities for money lent to the Emperor, that they might be torn and destroyed—a very convenient and expeditious method of settling accounts with one's creditors !

From Kennemaar a hundred citizens were to come bare-headed and bare-footed, to kneel at the Duke's feet and implore pardon, to pay five thousand gold gulden, and to deliver up fifty of their number to be punished as the Duke should think fit. The men of Alkmaar were to approach him in like penitential guise in black shirts, bareheaded and barefooted, to destroy the gates, walls, and towers of their city, and to deliver five-and-twenty of their townsmen for severe punishment. All the other towns were treated in a similar manner ; but the tax-gatherer, Niklas Korf, who had been an immediate cause of the insurrection, received so large a compensation that his family was enriched for many generations. The Duke also received a *present* from the cities of ten thousand gold gulden, and every article of value possessed by the citizens—gold and silver cups and spoons, rings and chains, and the ornaments of the women—had to be sacrificed to the rapacity of the troops. The country was so thoroughly exhausted, that it was not till after the lapse of a century, that it recovered strength for another effort.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE CLOUTED SHOON.

It was about a year after the extinction of the insurrection of the "brothers of the Bread and Cheese," and after similar flames had burst forth and been quenched in blood in various places, that parties of the peasantry of Alsace might often be seen, in the darkness of night, stealing towards a wild and solitary spot, on which then, or afterwards, was bestowed the appropriate name of Hunger Hill, where they were about to hold a secret meeting for the discussion of their wrongs. There were among them, besides the peasants, mechanics, and men of some standing in the towns, and also some of those who always hope to find their account in fishing in troubled waters; ruined and desperate men, ready to swear to any thing, and who looked with fiercely eager eyes at the wealth of the higher classes, and hoped to enrich themselves by their plunder. Others there were who had been rendered desperate by oppression and cruelty, who had neither bread to eat, nor were allowed by their lords any rest on Sunday or week day, so that they had nothing to risk but a joyless and care-worn life, and could scarcely fail to be gainers by any change. The objects proposed at the meeting were twofold: first, such as should tend to release the common people from their slavish condition; and, secondly, as a means to this end, such as should attract all that order to join their standard, the driving out of the Jews from German soil, the introduction of a year of jubilee, in which all burdensome taxes should be done away with, and lastly, a rather extensive system of plunder.

As money was absolutely necessary, and there was little or none forthcoming, it was proposed besides to seize on the fortified town of Schlettstadt, where in the coffers of the city and of the rich convents, it was hoped would be found the sinews of war; and as an object of

first importance it was deemed requisite to agree on some external sign or symbol that might serve as a rallying point, and in which some mysterious attractive power was perhaps not unwisely thought to reside. It was settled that the new league should have a banner, adorned with a characteristic picture; and since the knightly order alone was privileged to wear boots, and the peasants, as a token of their subordinate condition, were compelled to wear coarse shoes, or brogues, bound round the ankle with leathern thongs, such a shoe was chosen as an emblem to be painted upon the banner. As soon as the members of the league should be sufficiently numerous, this standard was to be unfurled, and the wearers of clouted shoes it was calculated, would flock around it: should they not be strong enough for the cause they had in hand, they would invoke the aid of the Swiss confederacy. The whole undertaking, however, exploded prematurely, through the treachery of some one of those who were to take part in it; and such members of the league as escaped punishment had to fly for their lives into Switzerland. Undismayed, however, by the ill success that had hitherto attended the secret associations, the insurrectionary spirit continued to extend itself. In the bishopric of Speyer, about 7000 men and 400 women swore to join the league, and the admission to it was now made more solemn by the introduction of religious ceremonies. The candidate must kneel and repeat five Pater Nosters and five Ave Marias, and as a member of the league he was bound to repeat precisely this number of prayers every day, not only from motives of devotion, but as a means of recognition which would not be suspected; every one bound himself to support the association by every means in his power, and extend it as far as possible among his neighbours. A more complete subversion of the existing order of things appears now to have been aimed at; no tithes or taxes were any longer to be paid to prince, or priest, or noble, although the authority of the Pope and the Emperor was still to be respected; the chase, the forest, and the river were to be as free as God made them; and the lands belonging to the church and to convents were, with a few exceptions,

to be confiscated, and the proceeds distributed among the poor.

The town of Bruchsal, where the peasants had an understanding with a considerable number of the inhabitants, was to be surprised and taken, and serve as the central point of the insurrection; from there the main body of the insurgents was to move on to Baden, and thence on and on, remaining at no place longer than twenty-four hours, and not resting till the whole people of Germany was brought into the league, and "God's justice established on earth."

A banner was prepared, half white and half blue, on which, as well as the clouted shoe, appeared a picture of the Saviour on the cross, before which *kr 't* a peasant, with the inscription "Nothing but the justice of God."

But after all these preparations the plan was again betrayed, and this time through the medium of the confessional. One of the conspirators, a man named Lucas Rapp, confided the mystery, of course under the seal of confession, to a priest, who hastened to make it known to the imperial government; and Maximilian, who had begun his reign with the warmest professions of love for the people, and zeal in the cause of all the oppressed among his subjects, commanded the cruellest persecution of all who had taken part in these proceedings. The whole of their little property was to be seized, their wives and children driven out of the country, the rebels themselves quartered alive, and the leaders torn asunder by wild horses!

Such were the orders of the generous and chivalrous Maximilian; but fortunately they could not be executed; for the conspiracy had been so extensive that, had the princes and nobles put to death all of their peasants who had taken part in it, their estates would have been depopulated, and they themselves deprived of their most valuable property. A very small number, therefore, really suffered, and many took refuge in Switzerland and in the recesses of the Black Forest.

A deathlike stillness of several years followed this stroke, not that the peasants had lost the wish or the courage for the attempt, but it was necessary to allow



time for suspicion to be lulled. The scattered fugitives in the meantime served, like sparks from a conflagration, to kindle fresh fires wherever they came; for every where they found the same combustible materials, the same misery and oppression, the same longing for release from intolerable wrongs. Amongst those who escaped by flight the torturing death to which he and his brethren had been destined by the paternal mercies of the imperial "Landsfather," was one Joss Fritz, who had been one of the original movers of the league among the peasants, and who to a deep and burning zeal in their cause, united indomitable perseverance and patience. Should he fail ten times over, he was ready to come on to the eleventh trial without baiting "a jot of heart or hope;" he had been in many battles, and had had much experience in military affairs, and possessed besides many personal advantages, a striking figure, and a soldier-like carriage, as well as a gift of natural eloquence, where it was necessary great power of dissimulation, and that indescribable air of command, which is sometimes, but not always, the accompaniment of mental superiority; he knew how to adapt his address most skilfully to the character of whoever he wished to influence, to attack one on the side of material interest, another on that of religion; to infuse faith and hope into the doubting and irresolute, courage and confidence into the timid. Weeks, months, years, he patiently toiled to bind again the broken threads of conspiracy, and never lost sight of any circumstance that might serve, though ever so little, the cause to which, for life or death, he had devoted himself.

In the year 1512, he ventured to return and settle in a village in the neighbourhood of Freiburg, where he was even able to obtain a certain office, that of *Bannwart*, or ranger of the fields, under the lord of the place; and here he resolved patiently to "bide his time." Wherever he found a few of the serfs gathered together in the fields, at work, at inns, at fairs, or the festivals of patron saints, he took every opportunity to express, at first, in quite general terms, his opinion that there was much in the existing order of things that would admit of improve-

ment, that honesty and the fear of God was disappearing from the world more and more, that evil doers of all kinds were growing daily more plentiful, and the rulers of the land would do well to keep a more watchful eye over these things. From these general observations on the state of religion and morals, he would diverge a little into politics, and hint that the poor man had his rights as well as the rich ; and that if he did not look after them in time, matters would grow worse and worse with him. The tyrannies, cruelties, and manifold sins of their lords, of which almost every man of his auditors had had in his own person woeful experience, offered a wide and fruitful field for invectives that were greedily listened to ; but he carefully refrained from any allusion that might seem dangerous, or from making any suggestion of the possibility of relief, until he saw that their minds were wrought up to the proper pitch of indignation against their oppressors, and confidence in himself. Then he would slightly hint that any one who had a mind to promise secrecy, might "hear something to his advantage."

The official accounts afterwards drawn up dwell much on the fascinating powers of Joss Fritz, that he would "talk so sweetly that every one who listened to him, thought he was about, from that moment, to become rich and happy ;" and they of course pay the devil the compliment of regarding him as the master of so accomplished a scholar.

By degrees Joss advanced a little further, where the character of his hearers was such as to afford a sure footing, and declared his conviction that a great change was called for ; that they must trust to none but themselves to redress their wrongs ; and that, if they would meet him at a certain hour, in an appointed place, they would find others of the same way of thinking, and might hear and talk over many things.

A few miles from the village of Leben, where the road ran along the edge of a forest, there lay a solitary patch of meadow ground known by the name of the "Hartmatte," and this was the spot fixed on by Joss, for the secret meetings. The hour was to be that when the twi-

light is just deepening into night ; and here with no other sound around them than the rustling of the trees in the night wind, and the murmuring of the little river, and above the dark blue night sky, with its glittering stars, even the poor down-trodden serf might breathe out the story of his wrongs, and lift his eyes and his thoughts above the soil on which he trod, and of which he almost seemed a part.

They listened eagerly to Joss as he told them that the burdens laid upon them were beyond measure too great, that the poor ought to be helped out of the superfluities of the Church, that all kinds of wild game belonged as much to the peasant as to the noble, that in the perpetual feuds of the higher classes the blood of the people was poured out for their own destruction, that they ought to have no other masters than God, the Pope, and the Emperor. All this pleased them well ; but when he came to talk of a new *Bundschuh* or Clouted Shoe League, as the only means by which their grievances could be redressed, they shrunk back ; for since the former insurrection this *Bundschuh* had become a "word of fear." They determined, in their perplexity, to consult the parish priest, Father John, concerning it, but Joss Fritz had been well enough aware of the character of the simple people he had to deal with, to make a point beforehand of securing the good word of Father John, who accordingly replied that "the project was a godly one that would tend to advance the cause of justice, and that it was the will of God that it should prosper, as was proved by the Holy Scriptures." Thereupon, no longer hesitated to join heart and hand with Joss Fritz. After many nightly meetings on the Hartmatte, a list of articles was drawn up by Joss Fritz, and a journeyman baker, named Jeronymus, who had lately entered the service of the miller in the village, and who was his most active coadjutor. It is remarkable that these articles are perfectly free from any thing like seditious violence ; and the conspirators, it appears, were so anxious concerning the meaning and tendency of some, that Joss had to undertake to defend every one of them out of the Bible, and it was the declared intention of all parties, as soon

as the league should be formed to lay their wishes before the Emperor ; and, only in case he refused to sanction them, to apply for aid to the Swiss.

The whole assembly at length joined in a solemn oath of secrecy and mutual fidelity, and then came again a discussion concerning the matter of the banner, and the difficulty of raising the money for this purpose affords a striking instance of the poverty of the association. One Keliass Meyer contributed a small quantity of wine, which, on being sold, brought half a gulden, or about tenpence, and no one seems to have subscribed more, and many less. Some of the baser spirits in the assembly even began to murmur, saying, if they were to pay taxes, they might as well pay them to their liege lords, and thereupon they turned away and went home. Finally, Joss Fritz had to make up the sum required by borrowing another gulden from one Conrad Braun, who had come into the league in quite an unexpected manner, having set out one evening to seek two foals that had been lost in the forest, and coming to the Hartmatte, suddenly found himself in the midst of an earnest busy throng, where he had thought to find only solitude and the dewy twilight. He was induced, without much difficulty, to make common cause with his countrymen, and from him Joss Fritz was enabled to make up his deficit. The affairs of the league now went on encouragingly ; throughout the Margravate of Baden, the Dukedom of Wirtemberg, and along both banks of the Rhine, down nearly as far as Cologne, its ramifications extended ; and Joss found a very active coadjutor in a citizen of Freiburg, who is sometimes called by the name of Veltin, and sometimes by that of Stoffel. This Stoffel, or Veltin, is mentioned as having been distinguished by the richness and splendour of his attire, which gave him the appearance of belonging to the knightly order, and, in particular, it is noted that he wore a white mantle, bordered with black velvet, a silver star in his cap, and rode about the country on a white horse, a figure somewhat too striking, one would think, for the business on which he was now engaged, of weaving the dark web of a dangerous conspiracy. Among the friends and allies of the cause which

the exertions of these two got together, there was one class so curious and characteristic of the manners of the time as to deserve particular mention. These were the beggars, who were very numerous, and seem to have been recognised as a sort of guild, and to have possessed a patent, or legal right, to exercise their profession in the countries which they traversed. They obeyed certain chiefs or captains elected by themselves, and their appearance is graphically described in the chronicles of the time. One who traded on the capital of a disease in the lower limbs, wore a tattered black tunic, and a black felt hat, and travelled under the sign, that is the especial protection, of our Lady of Einsiedeln and Saint Anna, and carried about upon a board images of his two patronesses. Another was a stout jolly-looking young fellow, more than half naked, who used to go along bawling for alms, for the sake of the Holy Saint Cyriac ; he carried on business with an open wound in the right arm, which he would never suffer to be healed. A third had a little girl of seven years old, whom he carried with her feet tied up as if she had lost the use of them, and he had his hat stuck round with no less than eight images of saints, wore a long red beard, and carried a huge knotted stick with a sharp iron point at the bottom, a hook at the top, and a dagger concealed within it. One was a dwarf, and the proprietor, moreover, of a very frightful eruption on the face. Another carried a knife, and a large stone, by way of penance, as he informed the passers by, for having accidentally killed a woman by throwing a knife at her. Another, called Henry of Strasburg, hawked about spices for sale, and wore a long grey gown and a red cap, with an image of the Holy Child, and a sword by his side, and several knives and a dagger stuck in his girdle. Most of the fraternity had large wallets, made of ticking, slung before and behind, in which to deposit the contributions of the pious and charitable.

With the chiefs of this ragged regiment Joss Fritz and his associate Stoffel of Freiburg now entered into an alliance ; the beggars were to act as spies ; to bring information of the watch kept at the gates of cities and in various fortresses ; and it was also agreed, on the pro-

mise of a reward of two thousand gulden, to assemble the fraternity on a certain day, to the number of not less than two thousand, in the town of Zabern, in Alsace, which they were to assist in seizing upon. They were to act under the orders of the members of the league in the town and its suburbs ; and as the town was expected to be very full of strangers, on account of the festival of the dedication of a church, there would be the more chance that their mustering in such force would escape notice. Church festivals and fairs frequently offered favourable opportunities for assembling the members of the league without exciting suspicion, and nightly meetings also took place at many solitary inns of which the hosts were friendly to the undertaking, a certain reward being promised for every recruit brought in ; but care was taken that the confederacy should be so organised that no man should if possible know the names of more than those with whom he would be called upon to act. Joss had a particular sign for those under his immediate command, a small patch of black cloth on a red ground, sewn into the folds of a handkerchief round the neck, and also a particular form of words, slightly altered from those of the former Bundschuh, for the sake of mutual recognition. On the necessity of these watchwords great stress was laid by Joss, as well as on the preparation of the standard, which he now set about. It was, however, a dangerous business for which great caution was necessary.

A peasant who lived in a distant hamlet, and was quite a stranger in Freiburg and its vicinity, was ordered to go to that city, to a certain painter there, and give him an order to make a picture of a clouted shoe ; but the man, not relishing the commission,\*delivered his message with so much blundering and trepidation as to excite the suspicions of the painter, who went straight to the town-hall, and told the story to the council. When they came to look for the peasant, however, he had vanished, and no one could give any tidings of him, or tell where he came from ; there was nothing for it, but for everybody to recommend everybody to keep a good look out upon this evil spirit if it should show itself again.

But Joss Fritz was not the man to be disheartened by

a single failure, and he soon made another attempt. A painter named Theodosius had been sent for to paint the village church, and with him Joss managed to scrape an acquaintance; and going in one evening invited him to come and drink a cup of wine with him and two comrades, Kelias Meyer, and another, the bailiff, also a member of the league. When they had finished their wine, it was proposed that they should walk in the garden; and as they strolled up and down in the cool of the evening, Joss mentioned in an off-hand kind of a way, that there was just then a stranger staying in the village who had a fancy to have a banner, and requested to know for what price the painter would undertake the job. Before deciding this point, he naturally requested to know what he would have to paint, but he started at the very name of a Bundschuh, and protested he would not paint such a thing for the whole world. Here was another disappointment; and all that could be done was to threaten the painter as he valued his life not to breathe a syllable of the matter; and as the bailiff added a hint, that if he occasioned any trouble, he would find means to throw some difficulty in the way of the payment of the money due to him for the work he had done in the church, the painter thought it on the whole prudent to say nothing about it. What was to be done next? The silk had been already bought, and even sewed; it was of blue with a white cross in the centre, and had been secretly exhibited and admired by the members of the league, though some thought there ought to have been an eagle instead of a cross. But it still wanted the important symbol from which it was to derive its mysterious power over the hearts of their brethren. Joss's experience as a soldier had not taught him to regard as a mere folly this veneration for a standard, and he determined to find some means of accomplishing his object, but he would not venture to propose it to any one else in the neighbourhood.

After much seeking, he found in the city of Heilbronn on the Neckar, a painter to whom he thought he might venture to make the proposal, but only under cover of a disguise. He assumed, therefore, as he well knew how to do the manners and language of a Swis, and went to the

painter with a long story, which he told with an appearance of great simplicity, of how he had lately been in a battle, in which he had nearly lost his life; and that at the moment of danger, he had vowed if he came safe out of it, to make a pilgrimage to Aix-la-Chapelle, and there dedicate a banner to the service of our Blessed Lady the Virgin Mary. He therefore begged the painter to paint for him a picture of our Lady and St. John the Baptist, standing near a crucifix, and beneath them to represent a Bundschuh. The painter turned sharply round, and asked him what he meant by that; but Joss put on an innocent look, and said his father had been a shoemaker, but that he now kept an inn, and had taken for a sign this emblem of his former trade, and that, therefore, he, the son, had wished to place it in his banner, that every one might know from whom it came. The painter completely duped by the clever acting of Joss, no longer hesitated to comply with his request, and painted upon the banner not only our Lady and St. John, but the pope and the Emperor, a peasant kneeling before the Cross, and finally a Bundschuh, with the inscription, "O Lord, assist the righteous!"

Joyfully did Joss receive the banner, which had cost him so much trouble, and wrapping it round his breast, and concealing it beneath his upper garments, set off on his return home; but before he reached it the whole affair had prematurely exploded.

Before setting out, he had taken measures for the rising to take place immediately on his return; the Beggars and all other agents were warned to be on the alert; and it was settled that on a certain Church festival to take place at Bingen, on the 9th of October, the final arrangements should be made. But, only three days before the time, the indiscreet zeal of three members of the association led to its discovery. The near accomplishment of the project appears to have made them lose sight of their customary caution; and meeting a peasant on the road within a mile or two of Freiburg, who was going quietly about his ordinary business, they stopped him, and required him to swear by the holy saints not to divulge what they were about to reveal to him. As he hesitated to comply, they led him into a wood; and, with the assurance that it was



an honest business, pressed him so hard, that he at length yielded, and took the required oath. They then told him that six or seven hundred of the country people, who were suffering grievously from want and hunger, had resolved to establish a new Bundschuh, in order to take from the wealthy and the nobles some part of their superfluity; but first of all they must get possession of the city of Freiburg, where they would find an abundance of all of which they stood so grievously in need. As the peasant, however, obstinately refused to take any part in the scheme, and they feared his betraying them, they began to deliberate on the expediency of killing him; but the sound of horses' hoofs being heard just at the moment, they let him escape, and had to plunge into the recesses of the wood to hide themselves. The peasant, as soon as he got away from them, hastened to his priest, and told what had befallen him; the priest confided the matter to one of the civic authorities, and he immediately to the town council.

The council met in a great fright: the guards were ordered to be doubled at all the gates, and on the walls and towers; the wardens were not to carry the keys of the city about, but to deposit them in a place of safety, and wait for further orders in full armour near the gates; and the various guilds or trades were summoned, and admonished to hold themselves in readiness to assemble in the church yards, on the sound of the alarm-bell.

News came to Leben of these movements in Freiburg. Joss Fritz was still absent, and no one knew what was to be done. Had he been there it was thought, he need only have hoisted the standard of the Bundschuh, and he would soon have had a little army round him. As soon as night fell, the conspirators hastened anxiously to the Hartmatte; but all was panic, indecision, and dejection. Some proposed to give up the whole undertaking, and save themselves as well as they could; and all that Kilias Meyer could effect was to induce his brethren to renew their oath of secrecy and fidelity to each other, and with that they separated. Stoffel, who might have given some council, was absent too; it is thought he accompanied Joss on his journey, but from this time he vanishes altogether; and

the next time we catch sight of Joss, it is when he is flying for his life to Switzerland in the company of Jeronymus the Tyrolese, though still with the colours wrapped round his breast, still undismayed, and resolute to make another attempt, whenever and wherever it be possible.

The governments, in the mean time, were not idle. In consequence of information received, it is supposed from two traitors to the cause, the Margrave of Baden seized on many of the conspirators, and at midnight two hundred armed men from Freiburg came down upon Leben, and took many others. The punishment of the unfortunate peasants was, as usual, of merciless severity; they were put to the torture, but could only be induced to mention a few names, and they were only of such as were known to be either in prison, and therefore lost beyond redemption, or already in safety in Switzerland. Hanging, beheading, and quartering alive, formed, as usual, the final scene of the tragic drama; and the only mercy that seems to have been shown to the prisoners was, that some were permitted to be beheaded with the sword instead of the axe, between which two there certainly appears to be small choice. Joss Fritz after a little time, however, again made his appearance in the country, and was seen here and there, mostly about the Black Forest; but Fortune, who is said to favour the bold, still saved him from his enemies.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### POOR CONRAD.

It was on the lovely shores of the Neckar, in the dukedom of Wirtemberg, a country which Nature has made one rich and smiling garden, that the next insurrectionary movement took place. There, as elsewhere, the sufferings of centuries had slowly generated a noxious atmosphere, which at length burst into a flame. During the reign of

Eberhard the Bearded, one of the few rulers in whom natural endowments, as well as the accident of birth had seemed to afford a title to sovereignty, the people had been celebrated, indeed even ridiculed, for their fervent loyalty ; but the character of another Eberhard, his successor, had been so admirably adapted to cure them of this failing, that, after a reign of only two years, he was deposed by the estates of Wirtemberg and driven from his dominions. In his stead came now a child incapable of governing for himself, during whose minority the land was at the mercy of a handful of aristocrats, who seemed resolved to make the most of the period of their brief authority, and whose excessive rapacity induced so great a longing for its termination, that the people were well pleased when the Emperor and the Diet interfered to put an end to it, and declared the young Duke Ulrich of age at sixteen.

This new "Landsfather," as the Germans, waggishly it would seem, call their rulers, is described as a self-willed, pleasure-loving, "curly-headed" boy, with the additional qualification of an hereditary tendency to insanity ; but it suited the purpose of those about him who wished to rule in his name, to persuade him—no very difficult task either—that his precocity of judgment and uncommon talents fully entitled him to the exercise of sovereign authority. Since, also, he was so generous as to be always ready to assist the Emperor's wars at the expense of his subjects, he was soon complimented with the title of hero, to retain which he did not hesitate to double and treble the burdens of his already over-laden people,

They had, to be sure, the satisfaction of knowing ~~that~~ their sovereign kept a most splendid court ; banquets, tournaments, mummings, bear-hunts, visits to foreign lands, and a ceaseless round of "all pleasures, all delights, that noble *dukes* warm their chaste fancies on," gained for him a reputation surpassing perhaps that of our own "first gentleman of Europe." Great lords and counts were content to serve in his household (for handsome wages, of course), and mighty Princes were continually seen as guests at this little ducal court. His singers and pipers, huntsmen and falconers, his horses and his dogs, were the

costliest of their kind, and had been sought for through France, Italy, England, Spain, indeed all Europe. When he appeared at the Imperial court it was with a train of three hundred knights, who outshone in splendour the attendants of any other sovereign. In the year 1511, when he brought home Sabina, a princess of Bavaria, the niece of the Emperor, as his bride, he entertained a wedding company of no less than seven thousand distinguished guests; and the diversions that were kept up for a period of fourteen days were on a scale of such magnificence that it was said they were enough to exhaust the revenues of a kingdom. Yet when the wedding was over, the same kind of life was continued: whoever was most skilful in devising amusements had the best chance of receiving the most valuable office; and like the eastern Emperor, the dukeling was always willing to bestow a rich reward on the inventor of a new pleasure. The favourite jolly companions of the "Landsfather" were, of course, welcome to drive about as they pleased the swinish multitude of boors and burghers; highway robbery and outrages on women were considered as capital jokes; and if a peasant should happen sometimes to be knocked on the head, it was no such great matter, and could easily be made up; or if in any peculiarly atrocious case a judge could be found who would sentence the noble criminal to banishment for such an offence, it lay fortunately within the duke's prerogative to recal him speedily, as he was nearly certain to do; and then let the judge look to himself!

And what, then, was the condition of the people all this while? "Look here upon this picture, and on this." All taxes and imposts fell, as a matter of course, on the lower orders; the humble citizen, the laborious peasant, had to toil and earn by "the sweat of his brow," not his own daily bread, but the means of luxurious indulgence to his insolent masters; yet if the wild boar came tearing up his fields and vineyards, and the knight and his followers dashed after him with a troop of horsemen and dogs, he had no redress, and dared not even kill the beast, lest he should interfere with the pleasures of his lord. Nay, he might not so much as kill one of the birds, whose ravages from their numbers were almost as formidable, without

rendering himself liable to the severest punishment. All the old rights of common in forest, or chase, or river, were daily encroached upon by the courtiers and their followers. The revenues of pious and charitable institutions were openly appropriated by the government officers to their own use. Certain cuttings of wood in the forests, which belonged from time immemorial to the poor, the duke's rangers now sold, and put the proceeds in their pockets. All persons in office were not merely corruptible, but demanded bribes in the most impudent and shameless manner; and all offices were bestowed without the slightest regard to qualification, merely as a source of profit to him to whom they were given.

New methods and pretences for extorting money from the people were devised every day. No one was now allowed to receive money without a permit from Stuttgart, which cost one florin and fifteen kreutzers, or more than two shillings; and certain services of government officers, which formerly cost about two pence, were now charged at ten florins, without counting the loss of time in obtaining them from the lazy and neglectful Jacks in office.

The constitution given by the good Duke Eberhard, and the Roman law which had been introduced, were equally set at nought whenever they were found to interfere with the convenience of the Duke or his creatures; and not only were pockets emptied, but eyes put out and heads made to fly off, without any other law than his princely will. The people he seems to have regarded as a beast of burden, to be governed only by the lash, and living only to minister the means of gratification to the pride, the luxury, the low animal passions, of which he was the slave; all duties belonged as a matter of course to them, all rights and privileges to his person and court.

That under these circumstances the soil of Wirtemberg was ready to bring forth, with increase, whatever seeds of insurrection should be sown in it, cannot be doubted; and nothing is more probable than that Joss Fritz, in some of his numerous journeyings, should have found his way hither; but the state of the country itself is quite sufficient to account for the fact that a secret association

had existed within it, very few years after the commencement of Duke Ulrich's reign, which had in view objects similar to that of the Bundschuh, though at first concealed under the guise of fantastic humour.

Descending from the high pyramidal mountain of Hohenstauffen, the original seat of the famous family of that name, we find a valley, watered by the little river Rems, the character of which is, for a few miles, wild and gloomy, but it gradually rises again into beautiful vine-clad hills, which continue for about fifty miles, till the junction of the Rems with the Neckar. In this valley dwelt the oldest vassals of the house of which Duke Ulrich was now the representative, and in this valley the general discontent now began to ripen into revolt. The first meetings had, or affected to have, a merely sportive character, and took their name from a man known about the country as "Poor Conrad," \* a droll fellow, who, being esteemed a merry companion, was generally welcomed wherever he went. The society, though professing to have no serious object, was regularly organized, had fixed laws and leaders, and appointed times and places of meeting; and at first it excluded all beggars, land-loupers, and vagabonds, as well as all who belonged to any class superior to that of the hard-working man. The ceremonies observed on admission seemed to be entirely of a facetious character: the chief of the order conferred titles and distributed estates in the Moon, on Hunger Hill, or the county of Nowhere, and the like; but the society also possessed a banner, much like that formerly described, representing on a blue ground a peasant kneeling before a crucifix, with the inscription "The Poor Conrad." This banner, however, and its signification, were secrets to all but those most deeply initiated. The Duke and his government were well aware of most of the proceedings of the "Poor Conrad;" but looked on in careless scorn, not deeming the subject of the thoughts and feelings of the peasants so much as worth an inquiry. One of the first open manifestations of the humour that was in them took place about the year

\* There was a pun in the dialect of the country on the word Conrad, which sounded like *Kein-Rath*, or "No-Help."

1514, on occasion of a new device that had been adopted to squeeze money from the people—the sole purpose for which the Duke's government appears to have existed. An additional tax had been laid upon every hundredweight of meat and every measure of wine consumed; but, lest it might not bring in money fast enough, the ordinance was “amended” by a fraudulent and scandalous diminution of the weights and measures.

This did not fail, of course to attract the notice of the people; and one market day, when a great concourse was assembled (it was on the Saturday morning before Easter Sunday), a member of the “Poor Conrad,” named Peter Geiss, a fellow who had the reputation of being what in London slang is called “wide awake,” proposed by way of joke, to try the new weights and measures by the water ordeal. If they should swim, it would be a sign that the Duke was in the right; if they sank, that the people were. The proposal was carried by acclamation; and a great mob went off to the town-house, to get hold of some drums and pipes that were kept there, and thence to the shambles, for a number of the new weights, which Geiss Peter, or Peter Geiss, for he is called both ways, hung round the shoulders of his comrades. Away they went now, with drums beating and pipes playing, down to the river bank, the crowd increasing at every step; and there he very gravely took the weights from his companions, and saying “Sink if we are right, swim if we are wrong,” threw them into the water. As the weights sank, the people set up a great shout, and exclaimed that they had won. It was afterwards thought that this facetious scene had not been altogether so much *impromptu* as had been supposed, but that it had been devised to afford some means of guessing how far the support of the country people could be relied on; and within an hour afterwards Geiss Peter had crossed the Rems, and repeated the same performance with the same pomp and circumstance in another place, whilst he despatched a trusted comrade to try it in a third. A more favourable moment could hardly have been chosen for the “Poor Conrad” to make his *début*; for there had been six bad harvests in succession, many of the vines had been frozen in the preceding winter, and the price of provisions

had risen enormously from this cause, independently of the taxes. The same evening, Geiss Peter and his followers moved along the valley to the beautiful opening in which lay the ancient town of Schorndorf. The mob of peasants now amounted to between four and five thousand; and they called on the people of Schorndorf to join them, openly declaring that it was their intention to have the new taxes done away with, and all their ancient freedom restored. It happened that the chief officers of this town were great favourites with the country people, and they now came out and spoke them fair, and offered them abundant refreshment of bread and wine, which was, however, distributed outside the gates.

Insurrection had, therefore, at all events, brought so much good fruit—soft words and a plentiful meal the serfs ate and drank, and were merry, and withdrew rejoicing, for once, to their homes, on receiving a promise that their grievances should be brought before the Duke and redressed.

Ulrich happened at this time to be absent on one of his many pleasure journeys; and a certain "wicked three" of his officers in Stuttgart, who had been chiefly instrumental in exciting the discontents, became frightened at this demonstration, and wrote to entreat his return, and he returned accordingly, nothing doubting that the sight of his princely person would immediately set all right again. He rode to Schorndorf with about eighty horsemen, the smallest train by which he was ever attended; after having previously announced his intention of removing the recent taxes, and of calling a Diet, which had not met for a period much longer than that fixed by the constitution of Duke Eberhard, which he had sworn to observe. On reaching the town, however, he merely summoned the municipal officers, rated them for their civil behaviour to the peasants, received their excuses, and rode home again, satisfied that all was once more quiet.

But by this time most of the Duke's subjects were pretty well aware of the value of his promises, and a rumour soon spread abroad that he was only endeavouring to amuse them until he could bring into the country a



body of foreign troops, for which he was negotiating. "Poor Conrad," therefore, became in reality more active than ever, though he now thought it advisable to hold his meetings by night. Messengers were secretly despatched into different districts, to warn the peasantry and townspeople not to suffer themselves to be surprised in a defenceless state by a foreign force, but to keep their arms in readiness; and a general meeting was appointed to be held at a certain Church Wake, to which every village was to send deputies.

The association daily increased in numbers, and was now no longer confined to the lowest classes, so that the notes of preparation at length struck even on the careless ears of the Duke. He began to think that matters wore an ugly, *Bundschuh-like* aspect, and wrote repeatedly and urgently to neighbouring Princes for assistance, declaring, what was true enough, that it was not his cause only, but that of all sovereigns and authorities of the Empire. He now also in good earnest bethought himself of summoning a Diet; and in the mean time despatched messengers to the disturbed districts, to endeavour to pacify the peasants, and incline them peaceably to await its decisions.

But the peasants were now not quite so easily satisfied; they demanded that they should themselves be allowed to send representatives from their own body, saying that if the Diet was to do any good to the peasants, the peasants must take part in its proceedings; for then the priests and nobles, and great men from the cities, would take care only of themselves. It was answered, that the peasants might make known their wishes through the cities; but this they refused to do, being well aware of the futility of such a method. On the 18th of June four-and-twenty of the members of the Diet assembled at Stuttgart, and at the same time there came uninvited a great number of deputies from the villages, to watch, and if possible take part in, the proceedings; and the Bishops of Copstance and Strasburg also presented themselves in person to act as mediators.

The Duke wanted two things: money to pay his debts, or at least such as were troublesome; and troops to

protect him from his insurgent peasants. But the Diet had by no means the same partiality for the Duke's vices as for their own ; and, now that he was fairly at their mercy, declined giving him any money till he would promise to reform his way of life and moderate his extravagance. The peasants' deputies also contrived, either with or without legal authority, to make themselves heard ; and it was whispered that large bodies of their brethren were assembling, and assuming a threatening attitude, at a place only a few miles from Stuttgart.

The tone of the proceedings became ever bolder and freer, and of course less agreeable to the Duke, till one night he and his knights, and his counsellors, suddenly took horse, and galloped off to Tübingen, leaving word for the members from the cities to follow him. Disputes now arose between them and the deputies of the peasants, though in their opposition to the Duke they had appeared for a moment inclined to make common cause ; and the latter wrote to beg him to return to his capital, or at least to permit them to lay before him in person their petition, as it was for this that they had been commissioned by their brethren. Moderate as this request was, the answer must have been an unfavourable one ; for a great commotion arose in Stuttgart, and it was thought the Duke was meditating some hostile movement against the city. In the mean time the Diet at Tübingen went on rapidly to justify the distrust of the peasants ; getting many of their own grievances redressed, and forcing on the Duke many unpalatable limitations to his authority.—but obtaining for the peasants no more than a promise, in general terms, that forced labour should be diminished *as much as possible* ; that the money belonging to charitable institutions should be really devoted to the purposes for which it had been intended ; that certain usurious practices of the Duke's officers should be discontinued ; that his foresters should not be allowed to ride over people's fields at their pleasure ; that *too much* game should not be encouraged ; and that the owners of vineyards should be allowed to drive the birds out of them ! In return for these concessions the greater part of the Duke's debts were to be thrown upon the peasants ; and though a

remote advantage might possibly accrue to them, in common with the other inhabitants of the country, from some of the concessions obtained from him, no notice was taken of the most important and pressing necessities of their position ; not a syllable was said about their rights, and their petition to be allowed to send representatives to the Diet was distinctly and positively refused.

The results of this Diet were nevertheless considered so satisfactory, that upon the strength of them it was resolved that a new oath of allegiance to the sovereign should be taken throughout the country ; and, from whatever motive it may have been, the Duke resolved to present himself in person, to receive that of the oldest vassals of his house in the valley of the Rems, the great stronghold of " Poor Conrad."

A few days before, on a fine, warm, sunny afternoon, a horseman, well armed and mounted, rode into the village of Donstetten, and stopped before the smith's forge. The village was still and empty, for everybody was out hay-making : only in the smithy the fire glowed and the hammer sounded on the anvil. The horseman called out the smith, and exchanged a few words with him, and then rode on to another village and did the like, and so on through several ; and that same evening there was a great stir among the peasants all over the country. On the appointed day the Duke rode to Schorndorf, with his usual escort of about eighty horsemen, amongst whom were the triumvirate so especially hateful to the people. The peasants had been commanded to come thither to pay their vows of allegiance, and they came accordingly, to the number of seven thousand, fully armed with swords, spears, and matchlocks, and wearing a stern and resolute aspect. One of the before-mentioned three, regarded as the chief of the sinners, namely, the hereditary Marshal von Thumb, was ordered to read aloud the treaty, as it was called, of Tübingen ; and, during the reading, the dark mass of peasants stood at first without sound or motion. But by degrees a murmur arose, sharp sarcasms were uttered against the courtiers, and even against the Duke himself ; the words " traitors and thieves " were heard ; something not civil was said of those who built

themselves fine castles out of the plunder of the people.— of wives and children suffering hunger to feed the riot of the Duke, and the swarm of idle vagabonds that he kept about him. Word was carried to the Duke, who during the reading had remained in Schorndorf, of the temper that was beginning to manifest itself; and out he came, redfaced and angry, with a score of his knights clattering at his heels, and nothing doubting that the sight of his princely face, nay, even of his plumed hat, would be enough to put to flight the boors. But he was mistaken. As soon as they saw him, they closed their ranks, and seemed to be placing themselves in order of battle. He rode up to them, however; and, after bestowing some reprimands upon them, ordered them to disperse immediately to their several homes, and go quietly about their business, in which case he might be induced to overlook what had passed. But there seemed now to be a strange intractable humour in these boors; and, instead of obeying, they began to call out that he could not pay their debts, any more than others, with nothing but words; that he would do well to go to his own home, and turn out the lazy vagabonds that swarmed about it, and ate up the people's substance; and the like impertinences. Thereupon, Marshal von Thumb had a bright idea, and called out, that all who would remain faithful to the Duke should come over to his side; but a great shout arose, and the people all fell back in the opposite direction, leaving the Duke and his courtiers alone. The ducal face changed from pale to red, and from red again to deadly pale, and his eyes gleamed with the wildest fury, as for the first time in his life he had to listen to the curses of the poor that now became loud. But the disparity of numbers was too great for any attempt at revenge, and he turned his horse to leave the field. As he turned, however, one peasant snatched his bridle, and another struck at him with his spear; but either some hesitation in his assailants, or the assistance of his attendants, saved him. He dashed his spurs into his fine horse, and with a few vigorous bounds he was free, although a voice was heard to cry, "Do not let him escape, shoot him rather!" The gates of Schorndorf were

closed, and it afterwards appeared that they had been locked and barred by the friends of "Poor Conrad" immediately after the Duke had left it. He escaped, however, got into the high road to Stuttgart, and, reaching that city in safety, sent a message to the insurgents, that he would give them three days to consider whether they would accept the treaty or not ; a remarkable instance of forbearance, which, it was rightly judged, was meant only to gain time for a signal revenge.

The peasants now thronged into the town, and, with the concurrence of their friends among the citizens, took possession of all the important points ; the standard of "Poor Conrad" fluttered in the breeze, signal shots were fired from village to village, and, after placing a strong garrison in Schorndorf, a large body of the peasants moved down the valley, and took up a position on a hill, called the Chapel Hill from an ancient chapel still standing, and there they were every day joined by fresh reinforcements. Still, although the three days which the Duke had promised, and many more, had passed, he made no attempt to attack them ; and, indeed, as he had neither troops, money, nor credit, it was not easy to see how he could.

It happened, however, that he could have found no more effectual method of subduing them than even this. The success of their first movement had put the peasants into high spirits ; signs had been seen in the heavens, and prophecies uttered, portending the prosperous issue of their undertaking ; and in addition to the excitement of these prospects, these men, accustomed to toil and privation, were now living a free idle life on the hills, and were maintained in plenty by abundant contributions, voluntary or otherwise, from all the country round. The involuntary contributions mostly came from the rich convents, and especially from the abbey of Adelberg, to which they paid frequent visits, as it lay only on the other side of the chain of hills where they were encamped. At first the supplies appear to have been purchased ; but when the abbot seemed willing to decline the custom of the insurgents, they gave him to understand, that if he could not send what they wanted they would come *en masse* and take it ;

and thereupon with many wry faces the abbot had to send his bread and wine, and whatsoever else was wanted, for he had in vain applied for help to the Duke. But, alas, there lay more peril in the wine cup, than in all that the duke could have done against them. The spirit that was aroused when these movements were first made known might have led to the grandest results, not only for the people of Wirtemberg, but for all the surrounding countries, and there were not wanting individuals with judgment to see what was required, and energy to carry it into effect; but there could not but be found, in a mass of men who had hitherto been in such an enslaved condition, much ignorance and indecision. Many had been roused only by the hope of having some immediate local grievance removed, and had little notion of the necessity of sacrificing small personal advantages for the sake of others far greater, but more remote. When the first intoxication was over, and especially as the wine and provisions were growing scarce on the mountains, many of them began to be again sensible to the habitual fear of their masters, which they had risen above in the first moment of excitement.—a fear so hard to be got over by those who have been long enslaved; and the life of idleness and indulgence which they were now leading was little likely to rouse a more heroic spirit. Some who possessed a few acres of land or any little property began to shrink from the sacrifices which they foresaw would be required of them, and to listen to the offers of compromise made by deputies from the Diet, which on account of the disturbances was now sitting permanently at Stuttgart; and spies of the Duke also found their way among them, who zealously fomented all tendencies to division, and insinuated suspicion and jealousy of their leaders. Quarrels now arose daily, and at some of them blows were exchanged and swords drawn; so that when an embassy arrived from the Duke to invite them to a conference, and propose in an amicable manner that they should suspend their differences till the Diet should have time to reconsider the matters in dispute between them, offering in the mean time not to press the treaty of Tübingen upon them, or take any notice of what had passed, if they would with-

draw peaceably to their homes, many began to listen to the voice of the charmer, and by trusting to the promises of the Duke certainly established their claim to the title formerly bestowed on them, on account of their surpassing loyalty, that of the "good stupid Wirtembergers." The peasant force on the Chapel Hill began gradually to melt away; and on the 27th of July the leaders concluded a regular treaty with the commissioners of the Duke and the Diet, by which a truce was agreed on for the time specified. The same evening most of the peasants retired to their homes, although some were clear-sighted enough to take the opportunity of withdrawing across the frontier to the territory of the free Imperial cities in the neighbourhood, to wait the issue of the business.

They were not kept long in suspense. The Duke's credit had been rising after the Diet had relieved him of the burden of his debts; and one Ludwig von Hutten, an envoy from the Bishop of Wurzburg, lent him from his private purse a sum of ten thousand ducats, an essential service which we may remember Duke Ulrich afterwards requited by stabbing his son. He had been, therefore, enabled to hire a body of mercenary foreign soldiers, which was soon increased by voluntary aid granted to him by the corporations of several cities, in haste now to wipe away any suspicion of Poor Conradism, in which the richer citizens had never felt any cordial sympathy. When the agreement which the peasants had entered into had been made known in Schorndorf, a part of the garrison left there quitted the town and went home; and on the afternoon of the same day the Duke's soldiers entered it. Their appearance was sudden and unexpected, and they marched in unopposed through the open gates, the Duke himself followed silent and grim, as if brooding over thoughts of vengeance. No sooner had he entered, than he ordered all the gates to be closed, and gave the signal for plundering the town, a signal which his troops did not wait to have repeated. The houses were broken open, and not merely of those known or even suspected to have taken part in the insurrection, but even of the rich who had not had the slightest share in it. All were equally plundered,

but the houses of the suspected were torn to pieces, the owners dragged to prison, and the citizens given up till evening to every outrage that the soldiers thought proper to commit; the gates meanwhile being kept carefully locked and guarded, that no information of what was going on might be carried to the villages around, and the country people thus put on their guard.

On the following day, they were invited to assemble outside the city of Schorndorf, to hear the decision of the Diet; and between three and four thousand complied with the treacherous invitation, though others fled across the mountains. A paper was produced, and, in order to hear its contents, the unsuspecting peasants drew closely together, when the troops by a sudden movement closed round them, and at a given signal from the Duke, who had ridden out armed to the teeth, and even his horse covered with steel, the soldiers fell upon them, made prisoners of above sixteen hundred, and drove them into the town bound and coupled together like dogs. In the course of three days, the whole sixteen hundred had been tried, as it was called, and subjected to various punishments, many to death with torture, and mostly under the personal superintendence of the "Landsfather." Lists were published of those who had escaped, and the severest penalties denounced against any who should harbour them—were it father or mother, brother or sister, son or daughter. Even a house where they had been known to have received shelter was to be immediately razed to the ground.

Such was, for the time, the end of "Poor Conrad;" another wave had broken itself vainly in noise and dashing foam, and the spray was scattered to the winds: but the tide was still rising. Of Duke Ulrich we shall hear more.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

## INSURRECTION IN CARINTHIA.

ALTHOUGH the nobles had hitherto quickly triumphed over every attempt of the peasantry to throw off their burdens, a vague feeling of apprehension was excited by the frequent revolts that had taken place; and since, though they treated every association of the serfs as a high misdemeanour, they well understood the advantage of combination among themselves, they now formed in Swabia a league for the more effectual repression of every attempt at insurrection, and published a declaration that "Since in the land of Swabia, and everywhere throughout the Empire, amongst the vassals and poor people disturbances and insurrections are taking place, with setting up of the standard of the *Bundschuh* and other ensigns, against the authority of their natural lords and rulers, with a view to the destruction of the nobles and all honourable persons, the noble and knightly orders have therefore agreed, whatever shall happen, to support each other against every such disposition and undertaking on the part of the common man."

In Swabia, therefore, for the present, all again was still; but the air was sultry, there were indications of subterraneous fires, and at a distant point the flames again burst forth. As we have seen, they first showed themselves at the north-western limits of the Empire, and now they had traversed, it seems, its whole extent, and were darting out at its south-eastern extremity. Throughout the rich valleys, and vine-clad hills, and flowery meadows of Carinthia, or the wild snowy Alps of Carniola, on the summit of every rock, in every mountain-pass or green hollow, a feudal castle had been reared; but the people, a Slavonic race, had not yet lost the recollection of their ancient freedom. Of this a most striking memorial existed in a custom prevailing in the country down to the fifteenth century. A few miles from Klagenfurt there lay, on an open plain, a round block of marble, on which the arms

of the duchy had been cut. Whenever a new duke was to be elected, the peasants assembled round this stone; and one of an ancient race, in which the right was hereditary, seated himself upon it, his comrades ranging themselves in order round him. Through their ranks the new sovereign had now to advance, clad in a peasant's smock-frock and clouted shoes; and with a shepherd's crook in his hand. Near him walked two nobles, leading, the one a black ox, the other a plough horse; and behind them a great body of knights and nobles, bearing the banner of the dukedom. As the procession advanced, the peasant seated upon the stone called out, "Who is he that comes hither so proudly?" and the nobles answered, "The prince of the country." "Is he a just judge," asked the peasant again, "a friend to the freedom and the welfare of the land, a champion of the Christian faith, a protector of the widow and orphan?" And the nobles answered again, "He is, and he will be."

Then the prince was obliged to swear that in the cause of justice he would not hesitate to make himself so poor as to gain his living by the labour of this ox and this horse; and the peasant, exhorting the new duke to remember his vow, got up and left the stone, leading away the ox and the horse as his perquisites. Two of the nobles then led the duke to the stone, upon which he mounted, and, turning to every side in succession, and waving his naked sword in the air, renewed his oath to the people that he would be a good and just ruler. The procession then accompanied him to the neighbouring church of St. Peter, where he heard high mass, after which he took off his peasant's garments, and, being clothed again in princely robes, received the oaths of allegiance of the nobles, and invested them with their fiefs. This ancient custom of the investiture with the sovereignty, by the hands of the peasants, continued down to the middle of the fifteenth century, when it was discontinued by the emperor Frederic III., who declared it was not fitting that he, as king of the Romans, should put on a peasant's smockfrock. He was obliged, however, to give the peasants a written declaration that this should not lead to the infringement of any of their

ancient laws or customs. These people, notwithstanding their high privileges, had, for centuries long, always passed for a good, patient, and obedient race; tending even to excess, it was said, in their submission to their rulers, and their reverence for the clergy: yet even here the ever-increasing tyranny and exactions of the nobles had now roused a spirit of rebellion. The country had for many years been exhausted and laid waste in the wars carried on against the Turks; in a period of fifty years it had been seven-and-twenty times overrun by a Turkish army,—churches, villages, and castles burnt, and two hundred thousand of the common people killed and carried into slavery. Earthquakes, too, had visited them among their calamities, and had caused much damage; but, worse than fire or earthquake, or the sword of the infidel, were the harryings and oppressions of the feudal lords of the soil. After the suppression of repeated insurrections the people rose again in the very year, and at the very time, when Poor Conrad raised his standard in Wurtemberg. All over the mountains the peasants were up, to the number of eighty thousand, vowing to recover their ancient rights and liberty, but willing, in the first instance, to try to obtain redress by peaceful and legal methods. They despatched accordingly a chosen committee of their number with letters to the Emperor, in which they laid their complaints before him; declared that the nobles had “gnawed them to the very bone,” but that they could never believe it was even with the knowledge, far less with the permission of their Imperial father. The emperor (Maximilian) was just then at Augsburg, and, as it happened, was by no means sorry for an opportunity of humbling the nobles; he therefore returned a very gracious answer, and promised that if they would retire peaceably to their homes, he would comply with most of their requests, and restore that “ancient justice” to which they were so much attached. Great was the joy when this answer reached them, and upon the strength of it they did not hesitate to separate immediately, and retire to await with the most perfect confidence the fulfilment of the Emperor’s promise. What followed is but imperfectly known, and

the chronicles written by the clergy and the nobles are mostly silent concerning the particular acts which suddenly changed their obedient hopeful temper into transports of ungovernable fury; but by the following spring we find the nobles flying from the vengeance of their insurgent vassals; their castles rising in flames and smoke to the sky; the very smouldering ruins attacked and levelled with the ground; while, we are told, "strange prodigies were seen in the heavens—three suns at one time, and at night mighty armies fighting in the air."

Amongst the nobles who appear especially to have drawn on themselves the hatred of the people, and on whom it was said "God's judgment had at last fallen for the sins of many years," were the lords of Mundorf, two brothers, who inhabited a castle surrounded with walls and towers of prodigious strength, on a lofty mountain peak in Middle Carinthia. To this refuge they fled on the first news of the insurrection, for they well knew what cause they had to fear; and seventeen of the other nobles threw themselves also into this castle, where they made a desperate defence. It was taken by storm, however, by the peasants, the nobles beheaded, and their bodies thrown over the walls, and the lady of the castle and her two daughters compelled, like the one in the ballad, to "lay their costly robes aside," and put on such as were worn by the countrywomen, amidst threats that they should now learn what was the peasant's life.

Many other of the dwellings of the nobles had met a similar fate. The beautiful castle of Arch, in Carniola, surrounded by magnificent vineyards and orchards, was plundered, and razed to the ground; the strong rock-built fortress of Sauenstein, the castles of Ruckenstein, Rudolfseck, Bulliggraz, and many more, mostly lying in fair and fertile districts, amidst smiling corn-fields, gardens, vineyards, and meadows, where Nature had done all she could to make a life of abundance and happiness for the poorest of her sons. Three months long did the peasants expend their fury on the abodes of their oppressors, and also, unhappily, on the oppressors them-

selves, whenever they fell into their hands, though we do not find that they were ever guilty of the diabolical cruelty often exhibited towards them.\* The nobles called in vain on the Emperor for help; he remained looking on quietly enough, and made no attempt to put a stop to these proceedings till the spring of the following year, when the peasants, thoroughly demoralised by the course of outrage and violence they had been so long pursuing, were easily overcome, and were hunted like wild beasts, and killed with as little remorse. The revenge of the nobles, in some cases, went so far as to depopulate their estates, though others were more prudent, and left their peasants just what would enable them to live and toil on. Thus over the whole extent of the empire the nobles were victorious, and the "common man" was pressed and trodden down into silence for a time.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### ULRICH VON HUTTEN.

THE year before the commencement of the peasant war, Franz von Sickingen was living in great splendour in his castle of Ebernburg, where, as wealth and honour had flowed in upon him in full tide, he had established a little court, which was illumined by some of the brightest names of the period. The good knight whom we have seen as the bold maintainer of the right of private warfare, the champion of "fist law," here makes his appearance in a different character. Not only is he


"In close fight a champion grim,  
In camps a leader sage,"

but a religious reformer, a patron of learning and the arts, and an advocate of liberal principles of government.

\* George Dosa, who had headed an insurrection in Hungary, was placed upon an iron throne made red hot, and a crown of the same material pressed upon his brow.

His name has become a word of power throughout the empire, and he is able to raise, by its magic only, in a few days, what may be called a considerable army. The new emperor, Charles the Fifth, rejoices when Sickingen is induced to enter his service, the whole body of the knights of Germany look up to him as their leader, the "expectancy and rose of their fair Order," and there are not wanting hints that there is no dignity too high for him to aspire to. Things have prospered with little Franz, it seems, since he and his three men agreed to serve for 12*l.* 10*s.* per month. Of the character of transition impressed upon the whole epoch, he is perhaps the especial representative; by birth and habits of life, belonging to the old times of feudality and chivalry; by choice and association, foremost among the movement men who were heralding in the new epoch.

With Reuchlin, Ulrich von Hutten, and other fine spirits, the soul of freedom had come to dwell in the feudal castle; and the mighty engine before whose power the whole system of the middle ages was to fall, like the walls of Jericho, at the sound of the trumpet, thence thundered forth some of its most effective broadsides against the colossal corruptions of the Romish church of the time. Of some of the most powerful of these, the author was Ulrich von Hutten, of whom, as he is perhaps less known than he deserves to be, a little may here be said. Sprung from a rich and powerful family of the highest order of nobility, he had been at the early age of sixteen placed in a convent, at the recommendation of his uncle, the Prince Bishop of Wurzburg, as it was thought the church would, with his talents and connexions, afford him the highest prospects of advancement; one amongst the ecclesiastical abuses whose name was legion, being, that all its most most valuable appointments, in Germany at least, were now reserved for persons of noble birth. During his stay in the convent, however, he conceived the greatest aversion to the monastic life, and, hopeless of inducing his father to change his determination, young Von Hutten made his escape just before the time appointed for his taking the vows. His father, embittered to the highest degree by this step, disinherited him, his



whole family threw him off, and at the age of sixteen he found himself alone in the world, with nothing to depend on but his good sword, and fortunately also a pen, an instrument that was beginning to be found an overmatch for the other. For several years he wandered over the greater part of Europe, wielding either weapon as occasion might require, a half-chivalrous, half-literary adventurer, suffering perils by land and perils by sea, plague and shipwreck, the attacks of various enemies, sickness and poverty, and almost all the ills that flesh is heir to ; sometimes fighting as a common soldier among the Lanzknechts in the Venetian wars ; sometimes finding his way into the most polished courts, and the most refined and learned circles, admired and esteemed by the foremost ; sometimes calumniated, banished, hunted about by his foes, yet never losing a jot of heart or hope, and through all sufferings of body or mind, amidst the darkness and the dangers by which he was encompassed, keeping his eye steadily fixed on truth and freedom, as the twin guiding stars of his life. In his many vicissitudes he had had occasion not merely to see but to feel what was at this time the condition of the common people. No longer blinded by the prejudices of birth and rank, he could see that their discontent had a deeper cause than that "hatred of the nobility and clergy," which has been hitherto so quietly assigned as the ultimate motive of the peasants throughout these insurrections. He saw falsehood and hypocrisy advancing their claims in the name of the God of truth ; he saw the religion of love made an instrument of cruelty and oppression ; man, whom a Saviour had died to redeem, becoming degraded by slavery and ignorance below the level of the beasts that perish ; and his heart became kindled by a glowing hope that he might become the means of the regeneration of his country. He did not sit down to weep over her wrongs, but, strong in heart and elate in courage, he set to work vigorously to redress them, ready to attack the powers of darkness either with spiritual or temporal weapons, and ever blazing up in fierce and fiery indignation against her oppressors. Through truth to freedom, through freedom to still more

glorious truth,—such was the bright path through which he hoped to cut his way to victory, His works are distinguished as much for their passionate and fiery eloquence, as for their keen trenchant satire, and are mostly of the combative order, as might have been expected from his position and character, and the many flagrant abuses and corruptions against which war was to be waged; but, in the few intervals of his stormy life which afforded leisure for gentler themes, he gained no little fame as a poet, and was even publicly crowned with laurel by the hands of a fair lady.\*

One of those few gleams of prosperity which his chequered course affords, was his residence at the brilliant court of Albert II., archbishop of Mainz, where genius in any department was always sure of reward and encouragement, and where poets and artists, musicians and scholars, found a genial atmosphere of warmth and light. But not through such sunny regions lay Von Hutten's path of life; and there was something also repugnant to his feelings in the thought that the means of all this splendour and profusion were wrung from the hard hands of poor and hungry peasants; that the philosophical, liberal, and kind archbishop who welcomed Erasmus and Reuchlin to his court, and threw into the fire the attacks of zealots on the first Reformers, yet lived by the system of superstition and ignorance which it was their business to destroy, and was even then engaged in upholding one of the most scandalous abuses of his church,—the much-talked-of sale of indulgences.

In 1517, Von Hutten published an attack on the papal chair, in which he did not hesitate to call the successors of St. Peter tyrants and highway robbers; and at the time of the Diet at Augsburg, when a question arose of an expedition against the Turks, he sent forth a flaming epistle, in which he declared that the Turks against whom it was most needful to take the field, lived in Italy, and

\* “We hear also that once, when Von Hutten heard four Frenchmen speak in disrespectful terms of the Emperor, he forthwith threw down his gauntlet at their feet, and challenged them, in the name of the German chivalry, to mortal combat: he fought, and overthrew them all.”—*Kohlrausch's Hist. of Germany.*



that the bitterest enemies of Christendom were the pope and his clergy. The pope immediately demanded that his assailant should be given up, and, in order to avoid bringing the archbishop into difficulty, as he was very reluctant to comply with the pope's demand, Von Hutten withdrew from his court.

Once more, soon after this, did Fortune offer him a safe harbour of refuge to his storm-shattered bark. His father, with whom he had been reconciled, and to please whom he had consented to study law at Pavia, was now dead, and a fair inheritance lay ready for his acceptance. His mother urged him to marry and settle peaceably upon his estate, leaving the business of his country to go on, as it might and would do, without his help; and for a moment, the vision of prosperous tranquillity and domestic happiness, doubtless looked fair in the eyes of the wayworn persecuted man. His friends were few, his enemies many and powerful; might he not now lay down his sword, and the pen, with which he had fought battles as fierce, and sit in peace at last under the shadow of his own fig-tree? But it might not be: his vows had been given to a holy cause; and, like the warrior who had taken the cross, he might never turn back, but must go on to victory or death. Of the former, indeed, there seemed at present but small likelihood; but should he take possession of his family estate, he might compromise the safety of his mother and his other relatives. His choice was soon made: he would give no hostages to Fortune by which she might attain a greater power over him than care for his own fate would give; he renounced his worldly prospects, and plunged once more with renewed vigour into the fiery conflicts of the time, fighting side by side with the "miner's son," the monk of Wittenberg, who as yet, at all events, was looked up to by many as the champion of freedom, the hope of Germany and of the world. "Be of good heart," he writes to Luther, "and go on with what you have so well begun; I on my side will do what I can. God is with us, let who will be against us."

In 1520, he published several dialogues, of which the restoration of the ancient freedom of Germany was the grand theme, as well as the separation from the court of

Rome, as a means to this end, no less than for the purification of religious doctrine. "The tyranny of Rome must no longer be endured; the axe is laid to the root of the tree: to your tents, O Israel!" Yet it is evident that the political regeneration of his country was the object he had most at heart, and it was rather the domination, than the doctrine of the papal church, that he sought to overthrow: he saw too clearly that the tyranny of the church was not the only burden which was weighing down his countrymen. To the accession of Charles V. he and many of the other friends of freedom had looked forward with hope, as men are apt to do with young sovereigns; but he soon saw how little was to be expected from that quarter, and he turned away in the belief, which many have entertained both before and since, that by the sword the wrongs of the sword could be redressed. Franz von Sickingen and the knightly order, Luther, and the free imperial cities, were the forces on which he calculated to effect the revolution to which, there is no doubt, he looked with hope as the only means for restoring the national independence and social freedom of his country. Of Von Sickingen he says:—"He is a man such as Germany has not seen this long while; and there is nothing for which we admire the great heroes of antiquity, that may not be found in him: he is wise, eloquent, bold, and energetic in action; in all that he does is seen the stamp of a great soul. May God bless the undertakings of this our German hero!"

The fiery ardour of Von Hutten's zeal kindled also that of Franz to a warmer glow. The castle of Ebernburg became not only what more or less it had long been, the asylum of all who needed a refuge, but the centre of a more active agitation than had hitherto existed. A printing-press was established there, and Luther earnestly invited to join those who had now devoted themselves, heart and soul, to the preparation, as they hoped, of the new era; and if he declined the invitation, it can hardly be supposed, if we look to the tone of his letters at that period, that he was induced to do so by his aversion to violent measures; since, in 1517, he writes:—"Of yon raging tyrants (the papists), methinks there were no

better council or medicine than that kings and princes should prepare to put an end to the game by force of arms. As we punish thieves with the rope, murderers with the sword, heretics with fire, why should we not much rather seize on these teachers of destruction, popes, cardinals, bishops, and the whole swarm of the Romish Sodom, with all kinds of weapons, and wash our hands in their blood?" But the Luther of 1517 was a different man from the Luther of 1521 and 1525.

It was the plan of Ulrich von Hutten to unite the lower order of the nobility and the inhabitants of the free cities with the mass of the common people in their great effort for freedom; and he also contemplated the remodelling of the higher order, and the assignment of a fitting place to them in the new organization of the state. The plan, indeed, much resembled that really carried into effect in England in a subsequent century.

It was on the democratic elements of the empire, the free cities, and the peasants, that the newly-awakened principle of religious liberty had acted most powerfully. Among the masses of the people, not among the princes and nobles, had it found its most earnest support, but to the knights, who were mostly vassals of the great ecclesiastics, the Reformation was also politically acceptable, as promising to elevate their order at the expense of the Church. The religious excitement had, indeed, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, risen above the political, but it rested ultimately upon that as its basis; the smothered fire had, as we have seen, smouldered for centuries, and burst forth repeatedly into open revolt; it was now Von Hutten's purpose to call it again into action for a nobler purpose. "Had not material means been wanting to the bold projects and adventurous spirit of Hutten," writes Cammerarius, a confidential friend of Melancthon, "a revolution throughout the whole empire would certainly have followed." The greater part of the papers relating to these transactions were, however, burnt in the castle of Ebernburg; it is therefore no longer possible to say how far he had proceeded towards the execution of them. It appears probable that the movement was to be begun by the knights and the cities, and the common

people afterwards invited to take part in it ; and from some expressions of Franz von Sickingen it appears that Strasburg, and other towns favourable to the Reformation, had agreed to the proposal ; and the before-mentioned paper affixed to a wall during the Diet at Worms, in which four hundred knights and eight thousand men-at-arms were said to have sworn to defend Luther against his enemies, and which closed with the words "*Bundschuh, Bundschuh, Bundschuh,*" seems to point to a powerful sympathy already existing between the people and the agitators in the castle of Ebernburg. Perhaps had the movement begun by Franz von Sickingen been delayed but a single year, he would have found the support he required ; and the people, whose constant champion he had been, and with whom he had long been a cherished favourite, what they so greatly needed—a leader of talents and experience, capable of guiding them to victory. But it was not so written ; the old feudal leaven was still strong in him, and in September 1522 he thought proper to open the grand drama, by a declaration of war on his own account against Richard of Greiffenclau, Elector and Archbishop of Treves, into whose territory he marched a well-disciplined little army of 5000 infantry, and 1500 knights, further increased afterwards by the contributions of his friends and allies. In his proclamation to the people of Treves, he announced that he came to bring them Evangelical freedom, and to release them from the rule of Antichrist and the priests. The Archbishop he declared he came to punish chiefly for the offences of which he had been guilty towards God and the Emperor.

It was "on the birthday of the Blessed Virgin," we hear, that he entered the territories of Treves, with his troops in martial array, with drums beating and trumpets sounding. The town's-people seemed to have experienced some misgivings when they beheld the advance of the glittering throng, and heard their woods and hills re-echoing with their triumphant music and shouts ; but to the trumpeter despatched by Franz to demand the surrender of the town, Richard of Greiffenclau replied in a tone of defiance that he had no mind to surrender the

town, but that if Franz wanted any thing out of it he had better come and take it.

In the middle of the night Sickingen silently drew his troops near to the city walls, and planted them in the gardens surrounding them at only a few hundred paces distance. A rich convent, that of St. Maximin, that stood there, and where he had reckoned on finding treasures that would help to pay his troops, he found only as a heap of smoking ruins, for the Archbishop had fired it with his own hand. At break of day the cannonading began, with every species of artillery known at the time, and, although a tolerably successful sally was made by the besieged, continued with little interval for three days. The pertinacity of the defence was unexpected, as it was known that many of the citizens were well disposed to Franz, and the walls and towers were chiefly manned by hired soldiers. But a method of attack was now resorted to which had been at first avoided. The besiegers began to direct red-hot balls at the private houses, and soon the town was blazing in many quarters at once. In the mean time messengers arrived in the camp from the Archbishop of Cologne, who offered his mediation for the settlement of the quarrel. But as Franz demanded 200,000 ducats as the price of his withdrawal, and stout Richard of Greiffenclau declared that Franz himself should pay that sum for the mischief that had been done, the negotiation was broken off, and the siege recommenced with renewed ardour. Extensive breaches were now made in the walls; stones, beams, and boiling pitch, were poured down upon the assailants; and everything was being prepared for the storm, when suddenly Sickingen received intelligence that the Elector Palatine and the Landgrave of Hesse were advancing against him, with united forces, amounting to thirty thousand men.

These princes had taken the alarm at the news of the levies raising for Franz in the Netherlands and other places, as well as at the hints dropped by his friends that their leader would soon be an Elector, or, it might be, *something more*: and they had previously sent heralds commanding him to desist from his feud in the Emperor's name; but Franz had answered carelessly that he knew

for certain his master the Emperor would not object to his chastising an arrogant priest.

To await the attack of so large an army under the walls of a hostile city would, however, have been madness; and accordingly Sickingen was compelled to raise the siege. The last shot was fired at the Archbishop's palace on Sunday, the 14th of the month, and the besiegers then retired slowly and in good order across the hills, and along the course of the Moselle, while Richard of Greiffenclau struck up a grand *Te Deum laudamus*. It was the intention of Sickingen to throw himself into his castle of Landshut, where, though for fear of a scarcity of provisions he would have to dismiss a considerable number of his troops, he calculated, from the strength of the place, that he would be able to hold out for three or four months until succours should arrive; but though he knew, now that the Archbishop of Treves would be able to unite his forces with those of the two princes before-mentioned, the odds must be fearfully on the side of his enemies, he did not know that the reinforcements he expected had been everywhere intercepted in the various territories through which they had to pass.

A general combination had, however, been formed against him, and Albrecht of Mainz had been fined 25,000 gulden for only allowing a troop of Sickingen's horse to cross the Rhine. Some of his confidential friends advised him, while it was yet time, to retire from Landshut to Ebernburg, where he would probably be safer; but Franz had enough of the romantic spirit of chivalry to make him always willing to fight against any disadvantage, and much of the high and sanguine confidence in his own good fortune, which is one of the most essential elements of military success. "It would be a shame," he said, "to leave such a strong house without suffering a shot to be fired at him, and he would find a way to leave it when he should desire to do so." Notwithstanding the immense superiority of his enemies' forces, all his messages had the tone of buoyant jest and defiance. When a report had gained credit among the besieged that there was a scarcity of provisions in the enemies' camp, he offered them refreshments of bread and wine, and sent a message that,

as he had new walls, and their Electoral and Princely highnesses new cannon, it was a pity men should not hear it rattle. He had wasted a good deal of powder before Treves, and they might now throw away a little upon him.

In spite of this gay tone, the knight had all the while the clearest sense of the dangerous position in which he stood, and the impossibility of his escape, if the promised succours of his friends should fail him. No help came, and the three Princes prosecuted the siege with vigour. At length, from the heavy and incessant cannonade, a tower, the walls of which were fourteen feet thick, fell into a heap of ruins, and a breach of the length of twenty-four feet was made in the wall. To add to his misfortunes, also, the knight, who was now considerably advanced in life, was attacked by the gout, so that he had to be carried up to the rampart; and one day, while leaning against a part of the fortification, a ball struck it with such force as to send a splinter deep into his side, and made a wound so wide that it is said his lungs and liver could be seen through it. He was carried to the chamber which he usually occupied, but refused to have his wound dressed till two faithful attendants, who had carried him to the breach and been struck down by the same shot, had been first attended to. As soon as he had been placed in his chamber the firing was directed with such peculiar fury upon that spot, that it appeared as if his foes were acquainted with his whereabouts. Poor Franz, declaring he had never known such unchristian shooting, had to be carried down to the vaults of the castle, where it soon appeared on the report of the surgeon that he had but a short time to live; heavier news for the besieged than that of the fall of the tower or the breach in the wall.

For the sake of his people the valiant old knight now consented to treat with his enemies, and consoling himself with the thought that he should not long remain a captive, agreed to surrender the castle on terms more honourable than in the present position of his affairs, there would have been any chance of his obtaining, had not the more chivalrous part of the knights and nobles in the

camp of his enemies shown sympathy with the dying brother, who had shed so much lustre on their order, and joined their entreaties to induce the Princes to grant them.

The thunder of the cannon was now hushed, and on the following day the Princes took possession of the castle, and, at his own request, entered the chamber of the dying warrior, who, placing his hands between those of the Landgrave, took the required oaths. Richard of Greifencloau could not refrain, even at this moment, from uttering bitter reproaches against him; but Franz answered that he had not made war on him without a cause, and that he should now shortly have to render an account of what he had done to a greater Master than the Emperor. He also declined confessing his sins to a priest, saying he had already confessed in his heart to Almighty God. After they had retired, and when the knight was in the agonies of death, the Landgrave bethought himself that there was one question he had forgotten to ask, and accordingly sent to know where Franz had put his ready money. He expired on the 7th of May, 1523, and shortly after, the body was placed in an old armour chest, which was lowered with a rope down the hill on which the castle stood, and buried in a little chapel near its foot, about six or eight inches below the surface, in the presence only of nine or ten of his brothers in arms.

The failure of the undertaking on Treves was a heavy blow to the cause in which Sickingen was engaged, and both thinned the ranks of his friends and lessened the confidence of those who remained. The sudden tidings of his death, which followed close upon it, grievous to all, were to Ulrich von Hutten fatal. He had gone to Switzerland in hopes of being able to raise succours for Franz, but had found his efforts frustrated by Duke Ulrich of Wurtemberg, the arch foe of his person and his house, and he was now again wandering as a lonely fugitive from place to place. Erasmus in Zurich had closed his doors against him, and driven him from the city, lest his own credit might be compromised with his princely patrons, and Ulrich von Hutten, again, as in his



youth, poor and an outcast, and now again attacked by a terrible malady to which he was subject, found at last a lonely retreat in an island of the lake of Zurich, whither he retired to die, worn out in body, at the age of thirty-six, but still looking forward with hope and confidence to the future that awaited his country.

Erasmus was living in splendour and joy, honoured of kings and even of the Pope ; his name still shines in the annals of science, his statue greets the stranger as one of the chief ornaments of his native city ; but the name of Ulrich von Hutten has been seldom heard beyond the limits of the country which he loved, and no memorial, not even a simple stone, points out to the wanderer the spot where his large glowing heart at length found repose in the bosom of his mother earth.

## CHAPTER XX.

### MUTTERINGS OF THE STORM.

IN the south-east district of the Black Forest, near the country where Joss Fritz had formerly raised the standard of the clouted shoon, lay the hands of a certain Count of Lupfen, whose peasants complained that among other grievances they were compelled on Sundays and holidays, and even during harvest, to spend their time in gathering wild strawberries, sloes, and such "small deer" for my lady, the Countess, and, moreover, what they seem to have taken still more amiss, *snail shells* for her to wind wool upon. The Count and his train, too, went hunting over their fields without caring what mischief they did, and on all the fine days the peasants complained they were sure to be ordered to labour for their lord, so that they had only bad weather for their own work.

It was, apparently, on the day of the festival of St. John the Baptist that the grumbling about this business of the snail shells rose into loud and open rebellion ; the

peasants, from seven or eight villages, renounced at once their allegiance to the Count, and on the night of St. Bartholomew, the 24th of August, moved off, to the number of about twelve hundred, to the town of Waldshut, one of the four forest towns, where there happened that day to be held a church wake. Here they were soon joined by the peasants of the Count of Sulz, of the Baron von Landeck, and the vassals of the Abbey of St. Blasius, and these together, now hoisted a flag with the colours of the Empire, black, red, and yellow, and established a union, which they called the Evangelical Brotherhood. Every member of this was to contribute the sum of one *baz* (about twopence) a week, to form a fund for the payment of secret messengers to be despatched to various districts, far and near, to rouse the peasants to join them. The insurgents declared they would, in future, have no lord but the Emperor; to him they would render his tribute, "to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;" and then he need have nothing more to say to them; but all castles and convents they would destroy. Their tone it seems had not become more moderate since the time of the shoe league, and affairs wore a threatening aspect, for the peasants had among them many men of experience in the Swiss and other wars, who were evidently aware of the advantage and necessity of forming a junction with the peasants in other parts of Germany, instead of allowing their strength to be split up as it had hitherto been into many fractions.

News of these movements reached the ears of the princes, nobles, and cities, constituting the Swabian League, and the Count of Lupfen applied to the Archduke Ferdinand, as his superior lord, for protection against his insurgent vassals; but as no one had at the moment any warlike force ready to bring against them, it was thought it might be well to speak them fair, and offer to negotiate. The Archduke, in the mean while, could oblige his vassal ~~the~~ Count with an order to the peasants to remain quiet, if that would be of any service, and he would, at the same time, appoint an Imperial commission to inquire into their grievances.

But the peasants were pretty well aware of how much

chance of redress against their lords they had in an Imperial commission consisting wholly of themselves; \*indeed, a count of Sulz is one of the members named, a near kinsman, probably, of him whose vassals were among the insurgents, and whose cause was therefore to be tried. At the same moment also, with the order for the commission, the Archduke had issued another for getting together a considerable body of troops, to which George Truchsess\* of Waldburg would send two hundred knights, but as they were not yet quite ready, the peasants were invited to a second conference at Schaffhausen on the 3rd of September. The day came; but as the envoy sent thither by the Count of Lupfen demanded no less than that the peasants shall give up their colours, and ask pardon *on their knees* for their rebellion, as well as make amends for whatever damage had been done, whilst the Count, on his part, promised nothing more than to forgive them, we cannot feel much surprise that the conference did not lead to any satisfactory result.

In the mean time, the military preparations went on but slowly, and the peasants, although there were now between three and four thousand assembled under the tri-coloured flag, seemed in no hurry to commence hostilities, but contented themselves with taking up a tolerably secure position near the edge of the Black Forest, where they awaited the attack of the nobles, the greater part of them being, however, only armed with scythes, axes, and pitchforks.

But now the Swiss canton of Schaffhausen began to interfere in the matter, for it owned many lands in the part of the country that was likely to become the scene of the contest, which would be sure to suffer, let who would be victor. The Swiss, therefore, offered their mediation; but the nobles declared they could do nothing

\* *Truchsess* was the name of an office hereditary in the family of Waldburg. It was equivalent to that of sewer or seneschal, whose duty it was "to set the meat on the table of his lord paramount." When performed for a royal or imperial master, such menial offices were elevated into distinctions, in the true spirit of the "pride that licks the dust," which the feudal system did so much to encourage. It is evident to most now, that humble services can be truly ennobled only by love, and not by any consideration of vanity or self-interest.

without the permission of the Archduke Ferdinand, and the peasants, that they required the consent of their distant brethren, who were in league with them ; and the winter came on before anything was decided, but a cessation of hostilities. It could hardly happen that so large a body of men could be collected together in so excited a state of feeling without any act of violence being committed ; but what we find noted, seems to have reference rather to the religious differences of the time than to the quarrel between the serfs and their lords. An outrage had been committed on a preacher of the reformed doctrines, who had been seized by a troop of men-at-arms in his parsonage at Burg, near Stein, on the lake of Constance, and carried off as a prisoner to Frauenfeld, and a party of the peasants assembling to bring him back by force, if necessary, had broken into a Carthusian monastery, just when the monks were at breakfast, driven them out without allowing them to finish their meal, seized the church ornaments, the robes of the priests, plundered their provisions, boiled and fried away at the good fathers' fish in fine style, and concluded the scene like a melodrama, by sending up the convent in red fire.

The leaders of the peasants, however, did not at all approve of the performance, and when some of those who had taken a principal part in this act of violence were seized and carried off as prisoners, and were afterwards actually tried and condemned for it, no opposition appears to have been made to their punishment. The idea that the attack on the convent was dictated by reforming fanaticism, rather than any other motive, is confirmed by the circumstance mentioned of their having heated the fire to boil their fish with the mass books and others belonging to the Romish church service.

On the mediation of the cities of Schaffhausen and Zurich, the peasants were induced to agree to a cessation of arms for a certain period, and promised to retire to their homes, on the understanding that the matters in dispute between them and their lords should be allowed to remain in abeyance. They presented at the same time a memorial consisting of sixteen articles, in which their wishes were explained in the most moderate and reason-

able terms. These articles relate almost wholly to the abolition of various kinds of forced labour, as well as to such rights as one would think could hardly admit of much dispute, such as marrying whom they pleased, without the necessity of asking permission of the lord, and, moreover, of hanging themselves if they pleased without affording the lord thereby a title to deprive their families of whatever goods and chattels they might leave behind ; \* a very significant article surely, for it implies that the lord had found it necessary to guard against the thrall's taking even this desperate method of escaping from his oppressions. He might not seek for an asylum, even where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.

Nothing is more evident at the beginning of this contest, than that the peasants entertained the most sincere desire to bring matters, if possible, to a peaceable conclusion, whilst the nobles never offered to negotiate with any other intention than that of gaining time and means to punish what they called the disobedience of their vassals. An autograph letter from the Archduke Ferdinand to George Truchsess von Waldburg is indeed extant, in which he is recommended to amuse the peasants with offers of conciliation till he should have his troops ready. In accordance with this advice, a conference was appointed to take place on the 29th of December ; but when the time came, it appeared that the discussions were to be carried on wholly by the nobles themselves : the peasants, therefore, of course, refused to refer the matter to their decision : another appointment was made on the Three Kings' Day, as it was called, the 6th of January to be held at Stockach, at which the nobles never appeared at all ; and by the end of the month, all being in readiness, the Archduke wrote orders for the soldiers to go in pursuit of the disobedient and rebellious peasants, "to seize them wherever they could find them, and put them to the rack if they refused to answer interrogatories concerning the names of their leaders, their plans, and purposes, &c." To the leaders themselves no mercy should be shown, but

\* Zum 12ten wenn einer sich erkenke, oder sonst entleibe, der Herr dessen Gut nicht nehmen," &c.

the soldiers should fall upon them suddenly at night in their houses ; or, in case they had previously escaped, their houses and land should be burnt and laid waste, and their wives and children driven from the country. The execution of these orders was committed to hands most fit for such a service,—those of George, Count of Waldburg.

The peasants having now become aware of the futility of their hopes of any peaceful settlement of the quarrel, had begun again to assemble, and the insurrectionary spirit had exhibited itself over such a great extent of country, that George von Waldburg found it difficult to determine in what quarter his attack could be made with the greatest effect, and his difficulties were increased by the ever new and contradictory orders he was receiving almost daily from the Archduke, and which it was sometimes impossible to obey. The insurrection in the mean time spread with fiery rapidity, the peasants were everywhere throwing off all authority ; they must be immediately reduced, it was said,—an hour's delay might be too much.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE PRINCE-ABBOTS OF KEMPTEN AND THEIR SUBJECTS.

IN a beautiful district called the Allgau, lying eastward of the Lake of Constance, north of the mountains of the Tyrol, and sloping gently down to the river Leck, the peasants had retained their freedom down to a late period. In the middle of the twelfth century, or even later, there were many peasant landowners as free as the nobles themselves, and owing allegiance only to the Empire. There was, also, another class of free tenants whose position was little inferior : they could come and go whither they would ; marry, make wills, conclude contracts, dispose of themselves and their property as it seemed good to them. They paid only a small duty to the altar and a moderate fine on the death of the pro-

prietor of the land. They had to choose some nobleman as their "protector;" but they might choose whom they would

The Abbey of Kempten extended its jurisdiction over the whole of this tract of country; its wealthy and powerful abbots were amongst those who could be chosen only from noble and princely houses, as we mostly find in such cases, also among those who brought most scandal on the Church, by their tyranny and pride. They had long looked with a jealous eye on the independence of their humble neighbours, and by a course of systematic encroachments, the peasants, once freeholders, were gradually reduced to be tenants, the tenants degraded into serfs. One of the first steps was to throw all kinds of difficulties in the way of the marriages of the tenants with the families of the free landowners, as by the ancient German law the children of such marriages were also perfectly free: and, again, they took every means to encourage their marriages with the serfs of the abbey, because they could then set up a claim to the children. Every successive Abbot advanced a step further than his predecessors, till at last, about the beginning of the fifteenth century, one of them had recourse to the bold stratagem of forging a document purporting to be a charter from Charlemagne to the religious house in question, declaring the peasants liable to all the demands the Abbot chose to make upon them. The peasants knew they were cheated, but had not the scientific knowledge necessary to make the falsehood of the document manifest, and the only men who could have given them any effectual assistance for this purpose were the clergy, who were, of course, arrayed against them. In their distress they had recourse to their ancient privilege, by which they were allowed to choose a protector, and they placed themselves under the authority of a neighbouring nobleman, the count of Montfort Tettwang. The Abbot made an outcry at this as an infringement of his rights: the affair was brought before a higher tribunal, that of the Duke of Bavaria and a council, and a decision given, as might have been foreseen, against the peasants, the Count being forbidden to receive them under his protection.

The peasants now sought the help of a certain knight of Freiberg, and even flew to arms to defend their rights ; but the Abbot appealed to the Pope, and the knight was threatened with the ban of the Empire if he persisted in protecting the rebellious serfs, and cited to appear within fourteen days before the papal delegates at Constance. As he did not appear, he, with his vassals and retainers, was placed under the Ban, and he was besieged in his castle at Wolfenberg. The peasants were threatened also with the Ban if they did not immediately pay the rents, tithes, and dues demanded of them ; the Abbot being called upon, at the same time, to make oath that he and his predecessors had really and truly a just claim upon them ; and two brethren of the convent also, by way of making assurance doubly sure, were required to swear to the truth of the Abbot's oath. The Abbot seems to have been a little startled at this proposal of an oath ; for, in the morality of the age, however venial might be his attempts to oppress and defraud the peasants, a perjury was really regarded as a crime. He demanded time to consider of it ; but the peasants, who saw in his hesitation some chance of final victory, urged that there should be no delay.

Several of the proverbs, in which the wisdom of ages is supposed to be condensed, imply that, when one has once stepped into a dirty transaction, the best thing one can do is to go on and get as deep in as possible. So thought the Abbot of Kempten ; and therefore, after making some wry faces, in a month or two after fairly swallowed the oath, and the peasants were beaten. He applied, indeed, subsequently, to the Pope for absolution for his sin, and received it ; but it does not appear that restitution of his ill-gotten gains was made a condition, for from year to year the peasants became more and more completely enthralled. If a free man or woman married a serf of the abbey, he or she was excluded from all participation in the services of the Church, unless they made a voluntary resignation of their freedom. Every day brought some fresh encroachment ; and whoever attempted resistance was thrown into prison, or driven from his land ; in justification of this conduct, it was



pleaded that the abbots "did no worse than other lords," and no one seems to have denied the charge in the name of his order ; but, on the contrary, the nobles seemed to regard the Abbots' cause as their own.

The subjection of the peasants had been so recent, and the memory of their free state was still so fresh in the territories of the Abbey of Kempten, that it is not surprising to find it among the first spots on which the war broke out. The frequency of insurrection during the last century had, it seems, rendered the Abbots, like other princes, somewhat apprehensive, and on the election of Sebastian von Breitenstein the year before, in 1523, instead of calling a meeting of the people *en masse* to take the oath of allegiance, as had been customary, he ordered that the parishes should be called one after another, on separate days, saying, "there was more harm than good in these general assemblies."

Some few of the parishes took the oath without remark, but many more endeavoured to make conditions, or obtain redress of grievances.—the abolition of recent burdens, the restoration of ancient rights to woods and waters, and, in short, seemed in so uncomplying a humour, that the Abbot, in a fright, swore, with uplifted hand, by his princely honour, that all these things should be done before next Candlemas, if they would now take the required oath ; otherwise they should be free and absolved from it ; and thereupon the peasants vowed allegiance, and departed.

The Abbot, however, seems to have thought the pledge he had given of his princely honour not worth redeeming, or else that, like that knight who "swore by his honour the mustard was naught," he could do just the contrary, yet not be foresworn.

The next year there were worse complaints than ever, and it happened that about the same time that the Countess of Lupfen was getting in her snail shells in the summer preceding the breaking out of the peasant war, in 1524, one afternoon during the hay harvest, while the abbey serfs were mowing, a young man, named Pelagius, came walking by. "The Abbot has a fine tall fellow for his son," said one of the peasants, looking after him.

"He would be," said another, an old man of seventy, who had seen better days,—“he would be if he were not the son of a monk.” These words were carried to the Abbot : the old man was seized, and thrown into a dungeon, and kept there till he seemed likely to die, when he was at last released on payment of a heavy fine. But before this old man was set free the general movement had begun among the peasants of Swabia, and the occurrence, though not at that time very remarkable, seems to have had some share in bringing matters to a crisis. The Abbot, like other lords, saw something alarming in the signs of the times, and agreed to refer the complaints of his people to the arbitration of a tribunal, to consist of nobles and the burgomasters of towns, to be held in the town of Gunzburg. The representatives of the peasants appeared, as had been appointed, and were met by the Abbot in person : but, as he did not seem inclined to yield anything of their claims, and the tribunal, apparently, did nothing more than report to the peasants whatever answers he chose to give them, they returned home without any satisfaction.

The place in which, in the ancient times of freedom, the great popular assemblies had been held under the open sky was, in many districts of Germany, called the Mallum, or Mallstätte. Such a one existed at Kempten, near a town called Luibas, and to this spot was now summoned a general meeting of the people from the seven-and-twenty parishes that owned the jurisdiction of the Abbey. Hither on the appointed day, the 21st of January, 1525, from the farthest parts of the Abbot's domains,—from where the Iller rushes through its rocky channel ; from the wooded hills of Hohenrain ; from the Wertach, and the Gettnach, and the Rotach, and other places with still harder names, came the peasants trooping, sometimes in company with respectable burghers of the towns, who seemed inclined to take the peasants' side in the quarrel. Others, again, espoused the cause of the Abbot, and disputes ran high in the town, while the great debate was going on in the Mall ; but no one interfered with the peasants as they went in and out to buy food and drink. The men who had been sent to Gunz-

burgh as the representatives of the peasants now gave an account of all that had taken place there, and of the refusal of the Abbot to listen to any proposal that might lead to a friendly accommodation. They concluded by saying that they had now called the people together, not to encourage insurrection or revolt against the Abbot, but to see if there were no way for them to obtain redress by an appeal to the law of the Empire. That this way of the law was a most tedious, difficult, and expensive one, they were all aware, and it was for this reason they had first tried by other methods to bring the Abbot to terms: they now desired to know how many of their number were desirous of adopting this plan. Such as agreed to it were to promise solemnly (not to swear) to stand by one another, and bear the costs to the end. A spear was now held up horizontally by two peasants, and those who were for the law were to pass under it; which, accordingly, was done by the whole of the persons present without a single exception, unless of the citizens, who had come merely as spectators. It was then proposed to set aside a certain yearly rent for the defrayal of the costs, and that each of the parishes should choose one or two representatives, who were to meet on the following Friday to elect a committee, to whom the conduct of the lawsuit was to be entrusted. After they had settled what was to be done in case the Abbot should attempt violence against any of their number, they separated, and returned as they had come, some in procession with music—but without committing the smallest excess—each to his own village, and his own home.

Thus calm, though resolved, was in the first instance the deportment of men who are said to have been instigated only by a blind headlong fury, and a causeless hatred to the nobility and clergy, and who, though meeting in considerable force, and with arms in their hands, sought only the redress of the law, tedious and expensive as they well knew it to be.

The proposed meeting of the deputies from the parishes took place on the appointed day, the 25th of January, and a committee of three was chosen, who drew up a protest against the conduct of the Abbot, to be laid before the

Emperor and the Swabian League : in this they offered to pay, without a murmur, all rents, tithes, and dues whatsoever which the Abbot could legally prove to be his by right of ancient law and custom ; but entreated that such might at least be suspended until the decision had been given against them.

How this willingness to abide by the law, this pacific and enduring temper, became excited to the fever heat of insurrection, there is no means of satisfactorily ascertaining. It appears that the Abbot, feeling some fear of their intentions, applied to the Swabian League for an armed force ; and about this time, also, many itinerant preachers, whom the writers of the time call Lutherans, a name, however, which they were in the habit of bestowing indiscriminately on all promulgators of new religious doctrines, found their way into this country. It seems not unlikely that they were disciples of Thomas Munzer ; and in either case it may not be without reason that the subsequent insurrectionary movements were ascribed to their counsels ; for in no part of the country was it more hopeless to effect any kind of religious reform without occasioning civil commotion. In this district, between Kempten and Ulm, there were no fewer than twelve great monasteries, without counting the lesser ones and beyond these again, to the east, lay the territories of the powerful Bishop of Augsburg, who as early as the tenth century owned above 4000 farms.

The notion of taking the law into their own hands seems to have originated with one "Ulrich the Smith," who had the reputation of being what is called a long-headed fellow, understanding many things besides his forge. He got together, in the first instance, only about twenty peasants, who met apparently for a drinking frolic, at a house where wine was sold. These meetings soon took place daily, not only at Ballringen, but at other villages and hamlets also ; and in the course of little more than a month there were no fewer than 12,000 men, who had sworn to free themselves from the bondage in which they had hitherto been kept, and "to have the Word of God preached in its purity." There were hopes that the town of Biberach might be induced to join the association ;

and two bakers, citizens of that place, who, it seems, were for prompt measures, had said among the peasants that before three days were over the city lords would be thrown over the city walls.

The Swabian League had answered the appeal of the peasants with fair speeches, but in the mean time they were getting ready their troops with all possible dispatch.

The country called the Allgau has been divided by nature into two districts of very different character. The southern consists of mountainous highlands, and thickly-wooded hills, enclosing plains yielding excellent pasture ; but almost too wintry in their aspect to afford a very abundant profit to the husbandman ; these were inhabited by a hardy race of herdsmen, who had scattered farms and homesteads thickly over the declivities of the mountains, and were sometimes clustered into villages around the parish church. In the northern and lower district the people were mostly occupied with agriculture. The pastoral people of Upper Allgau were the first who assembled and formed a camp ; but on the Sunday following the tocsin was heard from one village church to another across the hills and plains, and soon the whole peasantry of the country were mustering, arming, and forming themselves as well as they could into one compact body.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### MOVEMENT MEN.

IN the mean time, whatever danger the Swabian League and the nobles generally might apprehend from the open revolt of the peasants, there was as much or more to be feared from those who were attacking them with merely spiritual weapons. Since the year 1521, or earlier, a crowd of writings had found their way amongst the people from various quarters, which, whether in the tone of serious exhortation, of bitter invective, or of jest

and satire, bore all the same burden, the necessity of reform, and the impossibility that the people could any longer endure the yoke, or submit to the burdens laid upon them. Numbers of itinerant preachers had started up, men of various classes, learned and unlearned, of various ranks of society, some even of noble birth, who were going from place to place in imitation of the apostles, calling on all men to repent, and join in the establishment of a new Christian republic; placing in the strongest light the sins and enormities of the nobility and clergy; and whilst endeavouring to enlist the feelings of their auditory on their side in the matters in dispute concerning religion, seldom failing, as it was said, to "tickle their ears with abuse of the rich and the great."

The sparks struck forth in these politico-religious sermons fell every where on the most inflammable materials; and as in these latter years the measure of the oppressions of the lower classes had been filled to the brim, the consequences of resistance, whatever they might be, could scarcely be worse than those of submission. To the voices of nature and reason calling aloud for relief, was now added that of a powerful religious impulse, which, in sublimating into matter of conscience what had formerly in some measure been one of material calculation, raised men above all doubt and fear, and taught them to look beyond the failures or successes of this world to the glorious and certain rewards of a world to come.

The Catholic princes mostly sought in the new Lutheran doctrines the cause of the excitement prevailing in the minds of their subjects, and their desire, "under pretence of seeking evangelical freedom," to throw off all restraint and all submission to lawful authority; but to those who look back on the repeated insurrections in which, during hundreds of years, the people had endeavoured to obtain redress of their many wrongs, it will be obvious that the doctrines of Luther might have added the spark, but that the train was already laid. No one of the reformers occasioned the peasant war, for from every quarter of the horizon the clouds had long been gathering; and though they contributed to draw to earth

the lightning whose first effects were so terrible and destructive, neither to Luther nor his coadjutors can justly be attributed either the blame or the merit of sympathy with the insurgents, of having exerted themselves to break the fetters of the slave, or of having preached to the poor the new gospel of civil and religious liberty.

Among the true men of the people of the period, who, whatever may have been their faults, have suffered the usual fate of the losing side, in being exposed to even more than the usual amount of calumny and misrepresentation, one of the most prominent is Thomas Munzer, who has been made to bear the blame, not only of whatever befel amiss during his lifetime, but even of the excesses of the fanatical anabaptists which occurred *ten years* after his death, and the Wittenberg theologians themselves contributed not a little to those calumnies. Of the early years of this singular man (who was born at Stollberg, in the Harz mountains, probably in 1498) little is known with certainty; but it is said on good authority that his father had been unjustly condemned to death on the gallows by the Count of Stollberg, whose vassal he was, and this was the original cause of that deep and burning sense of wrong, which arose in the mind of Thomas Munzer, and formed the key to much of his future life. He studied at Wittenberg, where he gained a doctor's decree, and was distinguished above his contemporaries for diligence and knowledge; but previously to this, and whilst still a boy, he obtained a situation as teacher in a school at Aschersleben, and afterwards at Halle, in the year 1513, when he was only in his fifteenth year, and had even at that age formed an association with some of his companions, which had for its object the reform of religion. What means were proposed for this end does not appear; probably they were such as might have been expected from raw university lads; but the mere proposal of so high an object implies a state of mind very different from that of the mere vulgar, sensual, selfish fanatic, such as he has been usually described. The next time Munzer makes his appearance it is as chaplain to a convent of nuns at Halle, where he is accused of treating contemptuously some of the ceremonies at which

he was compelled to officiate, and about the same time he seems to have plunged deep into the mystic theology of the middle ages. Irresistible attraction for him had the histories of men and women renowned for their piety, who were, or were supposed to have been, favoured with visions and direct communications with divine persons ; and among these especially that of the Calabrian Abbot Joachim, the prophet of the twelfth century.

This prophet, who lived at a time when the most withered scholasticism passed for Christian doctrine, and when his country was suffering under a tyrannical yoke, endeavoured to find in visions of a future happier state, consolation for present evil. He preached vehemently against the vices and covetousness of the clergy, declared visiting the material temple to be unnecessary, and prophesied that Christ would one day again scourge from it those who bought and sold, and made it a den of thieves. The judgments of the Lord must first be executed, and the purifying fire go forth from his sanctuary ; but an age should come in which the Holy Spirit alone should reign, an age of love and joy, and freedom, in which men should be delivered from the bondage of the letter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The spirit of Christianity, he taught, was eternal, its form only temporary ; and this was the meaning of the Lord himself when he said that he had yet many things to say which the men of that age could not bear, but that the Spirit would instruct them, and lead them to all truth. That a community of brethren would in that happy age exist upon the earth, to whom should be given a Holy Scripture, not written with a pen and ink on paper, but with the power of the Spirit on the book of the human heart. That the order of priests and teachers should cease, for that there would be no longer any need of their ministry ; since an inward revelation in the soul would take place of all external authority, according to the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all



know me from the least unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

The deep earnestness and prophetic fire of the Abbot could not but strike a chord of strong sympathy in the enthusiastic mind of Munzer, and whilst still full of their inspiration he began to preach, with great approbation, many who were inclined to the reformed doctrines being well pleased that he insisted much on the necessity of a Christian life, and did not, like most of the Lutheran preachers, speak only of faith, to the disparagement of "works."\* In the year 1520 he was appointed to be first evangelical preacher at Zwickau, having by this time, like some others, who had at first warmly espoused the cause of Luther, become dissatisfied that the Reformation seemed by no means likely to perform what it had promised. To abolish the sale of indulgences, to renounce the doctrines of purgatory and masses for the dead, and deny the power of the Pope, was still, he declared, only half a reformation, and the exaltation of faith above works, on which Luther had so much stress, had done more harm than all the abuses of the papacy. In Thuringia, where Munzer was now beginning to attract attention, the seeds of religious enthusiasm had been sown deep by the doctrines and the fate of Huss; and through the whole fifteenth century, a tendency to fanaticism and mysticism had been perceptible in that country. The sect of Flagellants had maintained itself longer here than elsewhere, and the persecutions which the Brothers of the Cross had to encounter, the fires in which so many perished, had not been able to destroy, though for the time they repressed the enthusiasm of the people. Now, under the influence of Munzer's preaching, it burst forth into open day. Sometimes, even independently of both him and Luther, the religious excitement of the time

\* Luther himself wrote subsequently (Luther's Werke, vol. xiii. p. 19): "This doctrine of the justification by faith alone, we ought to receive with hearty thanks, and amend our lives accordingly; but we do just the contrary. The people have now seven devils, where before they had but one, and are now become more covetous, cunning, selfish, unchaste, and unmerciful than they were under the pope."

brought forth various fantastic births, and among others that of a fanatical sect, under the guidance of Nicholas Storch, a cloth-maker, and some others; they declared themselves to be prophets, rejected the ministry of priests, and all ceremonies, especially that of infant baptism. They announced the approach of the day of judgment and the destruction of sinners, after which the kingdom of God upon earth was to begin, and there was to be one faith and one baptism.

These proceedings were far from welcome to the Reformation party; but it was not immediately easy to see how their authors were to be dealt with, for the Lutherans themselves had been foremost to suggest and encourage such pretensions.

"Simple Christians with the Word in their hands," says a warm panegyrist of Luther,\* "undertook to defend the reformed (that is Luther's) doctrine.\* \* \* The humblest men and the weaker sex, with the help of the Word convinced and captivated souls. At Ingolstadt, a young weaver read Luther's works to the assembled crowd under the very eye of Dr. Eck. In the same city, the university having sought to compel a pupil of Melancthon to retract, a woman, Argula von Staufen, undertook his defence, and challenged the doctors to dispute with her. *Women and children, artisans and soldiers*, knew more about the Bible than the doctors of the schools, or the priests of the altars." Yet now these same Lutherans were ready to pour boundless ridicule and invective on those who used similar language.

The pretensions of the Anabaptists to divine revelation and supernatural power by no means excited the immediate and contemptuous disbelief that they would have met with in our days. The wise Elector Frederic of Saxony, considering it possible they might be instruments of God's purposes, shrank from acting against them, and Luther himself did not deny their power, though he declared they were indebted for it not to God, but to the devil. Munzer unquestionably believed in the possibility of their possessing supernatural gifts, though not that they actually did possess them, and though at first he

\* D'Aubigny, in his "History of the Reformation."

spoke of them in slighting terms, he afterwards openly espoused their cause. They were forbidden to preach in Zwickau, or to hold public meetings, and by degrees, in proportion to the severity with which they were treated, their conduct became more wild and fanatical, and in their secret meetings the authority of the magistracy, and all external rites of the Church, became more and more the subject of invective. The most violent were at length seized and thrown into prison; but the greater part of them left the city, some going to Wittenberg, and others to Bohemia.

Thither also in 1521 went Munzer, with the intention, it is believed, of joining the disciples of Huss,

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### MOVEMENT MEN.

IN exile, Munzer began to brood with still deeper earnestness over the plans of political and religious reform, which had occupied his soul from boyhood, and the belief grew stronger than ever that he was himself a divinely appointed instrument of God's judgments upon evildoers. In the Roman priesthood, he, like the other reformers, believed he saw the enemies of the people and of Jesus Christ, but he extended his indignation also to their temporal oppressors who had corrupted the world, disturbed the social harmony designed by Providence, and for the gratification of their ambition, covetousness, and evil passions had deprived their poorer brethren of every enjoyment of existence. The more deeply he studied the Scriptures the more flagrant did the contrast appear between what was and what ought to be. Like the English Puritans, he considered that if Christianity were indeed the very breath of our spiritual life, and the sole foundation on which the whole moral fabric was to be built, it should govern political relations as well as those of

private life, and the New Testament give laws to the state as well as to the individual. In this manner only, he thought, could Christianity be realized in the world, and the kingdom of God come upon earth : and when we consider the social condition of Germany at that period, we can surely not wonder that he could not understand how the frightful disparities in the condition of various classes were to be reconciled with the ideas of brotherly love, freedom, and equality in the sight of God, which he found proclaimed in the Gospel. If he rushed towards the objects he had in view with perilous impetuosity, forgetting that such changes as he contemplated, even where they were not really impracticable, must proceed slowly and gradually from within, and could not be the mere result of alteration suddenly and violently effected from without, we may recollect in his excuse that it was an error into which half Europe fell when the world was nearly three hundred years older.

The fiery ardour natural to the character of Munzer became more and more inflamed by his continual studies of the Old Testament, and of the commands to revenge and extirmination written in characters of flame along the pages of Isaiah and Jeremiah, till the revolutionary ideas of Abbot Joachim in him became revolutionary deeds. He was not content with imagining a future state of blessedness ; on this earth, on this firm German soil, should the new Jerusalem be built ; and accordingly, in Prague, where such an action required no little boldness, he wrote in Latin and German a vehement attack upon the clergy, declaring that they knew nothing of God, of faith, or of Christian virtue and good works, and that abuse and fraud had begun to creep into the Church from the time when the people had left off choosing their own preachers. Since then "the doctrine and discipline of the Church had no longer harmonised with the voice of God, but had degenerated into unmeaning prattle and fantastic ceremonies, worthy of babes and sucklings."

In many of his writings Munzer earnestly contends against an anxious clinging to the form without regard to the spirit of Christianity, and especially where it was made to enjoin a blind obedience to the letter under all

circumstances. He points to the continual operation of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, to the powers of the human mind itself as the purest source of truth, through which only the truths of the Bible can be recognized, and to which God reveals himself to-day as he did thousands of years ago. He rejects as irrational and unchristian the doctrine of justification by faith alone,\* enjoins the seeking for God less without in books than within in our own hearts, and declares that there is no other devil than the evil desires and inclinations of man; that the Holy Spirit has been given to every human being, and that the heaven to which man is destined may be sought and found even in this world.† Munzer might be a fanatic, but was neither a madman nor a hypocrite, as he has been represented. As an orator he was greatly inferior to Luther, and far from being able like him to clothe every thought instantly with the most striking and appropriate language, he often, it is said, appeared struggling for an expression that he could not find; no winged words stood ready at his command; his style was often hard, laboured, and awkward; but to the multitude of his hearers the defects of his composition were more than compensated by the prophetic fire of his delivery, and the intimate knowledge of the Scriptures, which enabled him always to find a text to justify whatever he recommended to be done, or forge thunderbolts at will, to launch against his and the people's enemies in Church and State, for the subject of his discourses was quite as often political as religious.

It was in Alstedt in Thuringia that he next appeared as a preacher towards the end of the year 1522, and it is stated‡ that he preceded Luther in many of the reforms subsequently adopted by all Protestant churches, such as having the service performed in the German language,

\* In the quite early days of the Reformation, its best friends and supporters complained that the exaggerated value that had been given to faith by the Lutheran preachers was producing a most injurious effect on public morals and church discipline.

† Passages in Munzer's writings, by Sebastian Franck, Melancthon, and Joh. Müllner.

‡ By Dr. Zimmermann, in his *Allgemeine Geschichte des Bauernkriegs*.

and allowing the whole of the Bible to be placed in the hands of the people. He endeavoured at first to bring over the Elector of Saxony and others to his views of reform ; but failing in this he turned to the people and preached to them to the effect, that " Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow ;" and taking him at his word, more literally perhaps than he intended, they rushed after one of his sermons to the chapel of Mellerbach, famous in the neighbourhood as a shrine for pilgrims, and not only destroyed all the images of saints but burnt the chapel itself. Some substantial citizens of Alstedt, who appear to have been among the actors on this occasion, when summoned to Weimar to answer for it, defended themselves by quoting from Deuteronomy, " Ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and burn their graven images with fire, for ye are an holy people unto the Lord." The two Saxon princes, Frederic and John, then came themselves to Alstedt, and summoned Munzer to the castle to preach before them, which he did in the same tone of wild enthusiasm or fanaticism in which he had addressed the people. He exhorted them to root out idolatry from the land, and establish the Gospel by force. Priests, monks, and ungodly rulers who should oppose this were to be slain ; for the ungodly had no right to live longer than the elect would permit them : he told also many home truths to his noble auditors. The princes and lords themselves, he said, were at the bottom of much mischief : they seized on all things as their property ; the birds in the air, the fish in the waters, the plants upon the earth, all must be theirs ; and when they had secured these good things for themselves, they were willing enough to publish God's command to the poor, and say, 'Thou shalt not steal ;' but for themselves they will have none of it. They rob the poor peasant and labourer of all that he has, and then, if he touches the least thing, he must hang."

It is a mistake to regard Munzer as the founder of the sect of the Anabaptists, for the enthusiasts of Zwickau before mentioned had formed themselves into a sect under that name during his absence, and according to a contem-

porary,\* neither he nor any of his disciples ever practised baptism of adults. But he found in this rite a convenient outward symbol and rallying sign, by means of which he might form an association more, it appears for political than religious objects. In his character of prophet, he did not scruple to announce as immediate revelations from Heaven, the suggestions of his own heated imagination, in persuading himself and his followers that he actually heard heavenly voices speaking to him of matters in which he required counsel. If, as has been conjectured, he did not at first really believe in these visions, but adopted this pretence as a means of obtaining credit and influence with his followers, he paid for the imposture the fearful penalty that commonly attends it. He confounded in his own mind the limits of truth and falsehood, and became hurried on faster and faster, as on the wings of a storm wind, towards the brink of actual insanity.†

With Luther, Munzer had now come to an open rupture, and wrote to Melancthon, that both he and Luther were stifling the Reformation with their worship of the letter; that man could not live by a book alone, but by the living revelation of God in the heart. Luther challenged him to a disputation; but Munzer would only consent to it on condition that Jews and Papists, as well as Lutherans, were to form part of the auditory; and to

\* Sebastian Franck.

† It is surely not incredible, however, that Munzer was in these instances no impostor, and that the visions had a real existence to his heated imagination, when we recollect Luther's fearful contests with the Evil One, and the many instances in which he showed himself deeply imbued with the wild superstitions of his native country. Among many other instances, my readers may recollect his advice to the Prince of Anhalt. "When I was at Dessau," he says, "I did see and touch a changed child, which was twelve years of age, and had all his eyes and members like another child. He did nothing but feed, and would eat as much as two clowns or threshers would have been able to eat. When one touched it then it cried out; when any evil happened in the house then it laughed and was joyful, but when all went well then it cried and was sad. I told the Prince of Anhalt I would adventure homicidium thereon and throw it into the river Moldau."

this the Lutherans would not agree.\* He was forbidden to print any more of his writings in Altstedt; but in the neighbouring imperial city of Muhlhausen he immediately published one of the most violent, on the title-page of which he is called "Thomas Munzer with the Hammer," in allusion to the passage in Jeremiah, "Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" and for his mottoes he chose two other verses from the same prophet—"See I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down; to build, and to plant;" and again, "I have made thee an iron pillar and a brazen wall against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land." He was ordered to leave Altstedt, and as it was supposed he would go to Muhlhausen, where he had many disciples, Luther hastened to warn the senate against him and his doctrines. He went, however, first to Nurnberg; but from thence also, he was driven, and now wandered about often without the means of providing for his merest necessities. His doctrine spread rapidly through all the disturbed districts, and the Anabaptist preachers, known by their coarse gown and broad grey felt hats, were seen on all Sundays and holidays, with groups of excited peasants or citizens gathered round them, listening eagerly to their inflammatory harangues. Even Nature herself, according to the chronicles of the time, abandoned the uniformity of her course, and by preternatural appearances in the heavens and on the earth, threw men's minds still more off their usual balance. Around the sun were seen three circles and a burning torch; around the moon, two circles and a cross. In Hungary, crowned heads were visible at night in the firmament, in strife; and near the Rhine was heard in the air an uproar and clash of weapons as of a great battle. The seasons reversed their usual order, flies and worms swarmed, and rose-trees bloomed in November, cherry-trees blossomed in February, while at Easter, the ground lay deep in snow, and water-spouts, comets, and destructive pestilences contributed their part to the general excitement. Whatever we may think of



the reality of these prodigies, the belief of their existence shows, at all events, the excited state of imagination among the people.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AN UNEXPECTED ALLY.

AFTER the insurrection of Poor Conrad, hundreds of the peasants of Wurtemberg had been driven, as we have seen, from their native country, and among them, in the words of a contemporary, "many an innocent and godly man had to leave house and land, wife and child, contrary to the will of God and his justice." Most of these had sought and found an asylum in the Black Forest, and in Switzerland, where they appeared day after day before the Diets, "the poor driven-out Wurtembergers," imploring the assistance of the Confederates, and invoking their sympathy for a cause essentially the same as that of their illustrious progenitors, Stauffacher and William Tell, whom the princes and nobles would have been just as ready to brand as rebels and villains as they now were to bestow that name upon them.

The Confederates, who really sympathised with these men, applied repeatedly to the Duke in their behalf; but in vain, and the Wurtembergers continued to wander like uneasy ghosts about the threshold of the country, to which they dared not return. A few years, however, brought another change. In 1519 we find the Duke himself a wanderer and a fugitive, deposed and driven out by the Swabian League, and under the Ban of the Empire, appearing, in his turn, as a suppliant before the Swiss Diet; and since he did not care, as he said, so that he got his land again, whether it was by means of boots or shoes (that is, of knights or peasants), beginning to meditate the possibility of making common cause with the peasants, his rebellious subjects, a notion not so preposterous as it

might at first appear, for his banishment and sufferings as an exile had really reawakened in their minds a kindly and loyal feeling towards him. A rumour soon arose that a new Shoe League was forming, by the help of which Duke Ulrich hoped to recover his dominions, and that an attempt was to be made upon Wurtemberg, on occasion of the marriage of a baron of Hemen, one of the very few nobles who had remained faithful to his person and his cause. It was the custom in this part of the country, when a bride was to be brought home, for all the young men to assemble and form a grand procession to do her honour; and under this pretence, it was said, the members of the new Bundschuh were to meet, and then, to go openly, with banners flying, straight to Hohentwiel, a fortress on an isolated rock, then esteemed impregnable, where the Duke was staying, and whence they might make an inroad into Wurtemberg. A new standard had been prepared, of white silk, with a sun and a Bundschuh in gold, and the inscription "Whoever will be free, let him come into the sunshine;" and on a road in the valley of the Rems had been found, as if it had fallen from heaven, a wonderful stone with a flat surface, on one side of which was engraved, the figure of a stag's horns, the arms of the Duke, and on the other, in Latin, the words, "Long live Duke Ulrich!"\* Of this last circumstance there appears to be no doubt; but it does not necessarily imply any understanding with the peasants. The rest may possibly have been a mere fable; but, at all events, it was sufficient to alarm the Austrian government commissioners in Stuttgart. They hastily sent orders to have all the garrisons of the frontier fortresses strengthened, as well as to all governors of towns to hold themselves in readiness against any popular movement, and entreated the Archduke to send them further reinforcements of knights, as they could not rely either on the citizens or the peasants.

Whatever foundation there may have been for these reports, no attempt was made at this time to carry any such plan into execution; but on the 30th of November,

\* From MS. Letters and Reports in the State Archives of Stuttgart.

1524, in letters from the town of Constance to the Abbot of Zwiefalt, it is stated that Duke Ulrich had gained many adherents in Switzerland since he had professed the Protestant faith, and that he had promised, when he should have recovered his territories, to abolish all forced labour and right of property in the persons of the peasants, to do away with all monasteries, and to protect the reformed religion. He had also, at the same time, despatched a noted adventurer, whom he had taken into his service, one John of Fuchstein, regarded as a clever, but unprincipled intriguer, to solicit assistance in money from Francis I. of France, who was now in his camp at Pavia. In his letter to that monarch, Ulrich says, "An opportunity had now occurred to get together a number of valiant men, both foot and horse, among whom also were many subjects of his and the king of France's enemies, amounting to several thousands, with which he would be able to reconquer his hereditary dominions; but that for this purpose he was in want of a small sum of money." He therefore beseeches the king to advance him 15,000 crowns, with which he will be able to raise a force of 12,000 men, with artillery, and pay them for a month or more.

While waiting the result of his application, the Duke lost no opportunity of endeavouring to ingratiate himself with the peasants. He paraded his Protestantism as much as possible, and rode about in person to various popular meetings, and spared no expense in promises to induce them to join him. Still, however, they remained shy of his company, and it was not till the beginning of 1525 that he finally prevailed on a small body from Hegau and the Black Forest to enter into an agreement to support him on certain conditions, which, it is hardly necessary to say, he afterwards broke through. He found means also to hire a body of mercenaries from various parts of Switzerland, and with these united, he finally made an inroad into Wirtemberg. The unnatural conjunction of the peasants with one of their worst enemies was, however, soon dissolved, and when it became evident that the Duke had not the slightest intention of keeping to any article of his agreement, they deserted him, and he

was left with his Swiss troops only. With these he laid siege to Stuttgart, in which city, the capital of his dominions, he had, it was said, one friend, namely, the executioner, who, while the Duke in the space of time between Thursday and Sunday, shot seventy of the citizens from the outside, lent him what help he could by shooting seven within the town, in so skilful a manner too as to make it at first appear that the shots came from the besiegers. The trick was discovered ; but the Duke's ally had made his escape. In the meantime he was likely to get little assistance from the king of France ; for on the 24th of February that monarch was himself defeated and taken prisoner at the battle of Pavia. The Austrian government also insisted that the Swiss cantons should recall their troops, so that nothing remained to Duke Ulrich but to get back again as fast as possible across the frontier.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE TWELVE ARTICLES.

THE defeat of the Duke of Wurtemberg now left the Swabian League free to turn all the means at their disposal against the peasants. Not only the troops under George Truchsess, but also the veteran soldiers from Italy could be brought against them, and the nobles therefore did not doubt shortly to have their rebellious serfs at their mercy. The peasants in the mean while, believing, as they always appear to have done, till bitter experience taught them the contrary, that the nobles and the League were in earnest in their negotiations for a peaceful adjustment of their differences, had prepared a memorial in which, in twelve articles, they made a distinct statement of their grievances and expectations. The same plan had previously been pursued by separate associations ; in Wurzburg the peasants had drawn up

fifty articles, in Mainz twenty-nine, in Munster thirty-four, in Memmingen eleven; all agreeing in the main points, though varying a little according to local circumstances. These were now all renounced, and the above-mentioned twelve articles seized on as the most concise and comprehensive expression of their wishes. It is not known who was the author of these articles, or whether they were the production of one or more: but, if they had not been generally recognised as the expression of the feelings and wishes of the great majority, they would not have been so eagerly adopted, nor spread as they did with lightning rapidity, in printed copies, throughout Germany. In the preamble to them it is stated that "Forasmuch as ungodly persons have taken occasion from the conduct of the peasants to cast reproach on the Holy Gospel, as if it had been the cause of insurrection, and an inducement to the common people to rise up and grow restive against all lawful government, and to contemplate throwing off all temporal and spiritual control, and the rooting out or even putting to death, all persons set in authority over them; and since it cannot possibly be that the peasants, who desire only to have the Holy Gospel made the rule of life, should at the same time be justly charged with disobedience and rebellion, they therefore earnestly entreat all Christians to read with attention and diligence the following articles, and judge them accordingly:"—

#### "ARTICLE FIRST.

"For the first, it is our humble desire and request, also the will and opinion of us all, that we henceforward should have the power and right to choose our own pastors, every congregation for itself, and should also have power and right to displace any who might behave themselves unseemly. That the said pastor should preach the Gospel pure from all human additions or ordinances; and we pray God of his grace to create and confirm in us a living faith in the same. For without his grace we are but flesh and blood, and are of no worth, as it is made clear to us in the Scriptures that by faith alone we can come to God, and by his mercy only obtain salvation. To

this end is such a pastor and teacher necessary to us, and provision for such has accordingly been made in the Scriptures.

“SECOND ARTICLE.

“Secondly, as it is ordained in the Old Testament and in the New, which is the fulfilment of the Old, we will gladly pay a just tithe of corn, and henceforward the tithe shall be collected and received by our church provosts, who shall also be chosen by the congregation, and shall first pay to the pastor, what to them and the whole congregation shall appear a sufficient moderate maintenance for him and his ; and that what may remain over and above shall be given to the poor and needy of the same congregation ; and should there be more than is required for this purpose, it shall be put aside for the case that the land should have to go to war, and to avoid the laying of any additional tax. And should it appear that any village or villages have sold their tithes on account of their necessities, and should any one be able to show that he has fairly bought them, we will then endeavour to come to an agreement with him to redeem the same in due time. But to whoever has not bought them, but has received them from his ancestors, who have appropriated them to their own purposes, to him we will and shall pay them no more, seeing that we owe him nothing, and that tithes are due for the maintenance of pastors, and afterwards of the poor, according to the Holy Scriptures. The ‘small tithe’ we will not any longer pay to any one, layman or ecclesiastic, seeing that God made the beasts of the field free for the use of man, and that this tithe is an unseemly one of man’s device only.

“THIRD ARTICLE.

“That whereas the custom has been hitherto that we have been regarded as serfs and bondmen, which is a pitiful matter, seeing that Christ has bought and redeemed us all with his most precious blood, all men the highest and the lowest without any exception ; therefore we declare that we are free, and will remain free, not as

obeying no authority, for it is not the will of God nor his command that we should live in fleshly wilfulness and disobedience, but love God as our Lord, and our neighbour as ourselves, and to do to him as we should desire to be done unto. And it is written that we should be subject unto the higher powers, and should humble ourselves before all men. We will therefore willingly obey all lawful authority in all things Christian and becoming, and we make no doubt that you will, as true Christians, release us from bondage, or else show us from the Scriptures that our bondage is just and lawful.

#### “FOURTH ARTICLE.

“That whereas it has hitherto been forbidden to any poor man to take for his use any deer, or wild animal, or bird, or fish in flowing waters; and whereas our rulers have in many places preserved and encouraged the same to our manifest hurt and damage, for the irrational beasts have eaten up and destroyed the fruits of the earth; which God has made to grow for our benefit, yet we might not complain thereof; this we declare to be against the ordinance of God; for it is written that when the Lord God made man he gave him dominion over all the beasts of the field, and all the birds in the air, and the fish in the waters, and that the poor man should be forbidden to touch the same seemeth to us to be selfish and unbrotherly; therefore it is our desire that if any one thinks he has a sole right to the fish in any water, that he should show his title in writing; but that in case he cannot give sufficient proof thereof, it shall be given up for the common use and benefit.

#### “FIFTH ARTICLE.

“Fifthly, we have also grievances in the matter of the woods and forests, which our lords have appropriated to their own use, so that if the poor man have need of wood he must buy it, often for twofold its worth. It is our thought that the lords spiritual or temporal should give up again to the congregation or commonality, all woods and forests that they have not bought, and that every one of the commonality shall take whatever he requires

for his necessity ; but not without the knowledge of those who shall be chosen by the commonality to see to this matter, in order that the woods may not be destroyed. Where, however, there are no other woods than what have been justly bought, we will endeavour to come to some brotherly and Christian agreement with the purchasers ; or if the woods have been at first unjustly seized, but afterwards sold, then also we will endeavour to agree with the buyers, in a manner conformable to brotherly love and the Holy Scriptures.

“ SIXTH ARTICLE.

“ Sixthly, our grievances are many, on account of the forced labour required of us, which is increased from day to day. We desire that this matter should be well looked into, that we may not be so hardly treated, or more required of us than was required of our forefathers, or than is agreeable to the Word of God.

“ SEVENTH ARTICLE.

“ Seventhly, we will no longer submit to the immoderate burdens laid upon the land, but the peasant shall enjoy his land in quiet, according to the terms on which it has been granted : if the lord require his service, he shall give it in due time, but in order that such service may not be to the injury of the peasant, for payment of moderate wages.

“ EIGHTH ARTICLE.

“ Eighthly, there are many peasants' lands which have more rent and other burdens than they can bear or than is equal to their whole value ; and we desire, therefore, that the lord shall have such lands rated by honourable people, according to their true value, in order that the peasant may not toil upon them in vain, for the labourer is worthy of his hire.

“ NINTH ARTICLE.

“ Ninthly, we desire that the punishments for offences should not be continually altered, according to ill-will or




favour ; but that they should be just and impartial, and according to the written law provided for the case.

“ TENTH ARTICLE.

“ Tenthly, it is a grievance that some have taken possession of common and meadow land belonging to the commonality, and we desire that the same should be given back, unless when it has been fairly bought, in which case we shall endeavour to come to a peaceful and brotherly agreement, according to the nature of the case.

“ ELEVENTH ARTICLE.

“ In the eleventh place, we will have that the custom called the ‘ death gift,’ shall be wholly and altogether done away with, for we will not endure nor permit that the widow and orphan should be robbed of their own, contrary to honour and the commands of God, as has been done in many places. No one shall henceforward pay anything for a death-gift, neither much nor little. 

“ CONCLUSION.

“ In the twelfth place, it is our meaning and intention, that if one or more of these articles should appear to be contrary to the Word of God, we are willing to renounce and desist from it or them, as soon as the same shall have been made clear to us from the Scriptures. And if these our articles should now be received and accepted, and it should hereafter appear and be made evident that any one of them is not according to God’s justice, it shall from that time be null and of no effect. And may the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all !”

It cannot be denied, that time and circumstance considered, this is a most remarkable manifesto. At a moment of hostile excitement, amounting to actual civil war, from men assembled with arms in their hands, in open defiance of their rulers, who yet, instead of punishing, were compelled to treat with them, its tone is moderate to a degree that might almost be called tame, but that in some of the articles in which not merely interest, but humanity and conscience are concerned, as in the eleventh,

relating to the rights of the widow and orphan, it rises into a tone of manly firmness and determination, that makes it impossible to mistake the temper from which it proceeded. Wronged and oppressed for ages past, these poor men now for the first time lifting up their voices and speaking out boldly in presence of their oppressors, yet indulge in no vituperation or invective, in no idle dreams of the kind of equality contemplated by many during the French Revolution ; a state of society—

“Where lords should mix with layers of bricks,  
And chimney sweeps ride in their coaches and six.”

There is no attempt to disturb existing institutions farther than is absolutely unavoidable, or in matters of religion and conscience that admit of no compromise ; no violent revolution is contemplated, the demands concerning matters of material welfare, the freedom of woods and waters, the diminution of taxes and forced labour, are such as had been made again and again for centuries. The boldest articles, and which involve the greatest changes, are those relating to the free exercise of religion, and the choice of pastors by the community, and these belong of course to the great reformation movement ; but even through these there breathes a tone of mildness and Christian desire of peace, which we look for in vain in the writings of Luther and many of the reformers. Yet these are the men to whom is attributed the “blind and brutal fury of a tiger broke loose,” and who, we are told, were “instigated originally by a hatred to the nobility and clergy.”

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### LUTHER AND THE PEASANTS.

IN the great collection of historical MSS. made by the late Prelate von Schmidt, is preserved the memory of one of the few nobles who seem ever to have felt any scruples

of conscience concerning the treatment the peasants had received. Henry, Lord of Einsiedel, lay on his death-bed, or what he thought such, and prayed, "Oh! merciful God of heaven and earth, I implore thee to make me aware if ever I have committed any wrong against my poor vassals, or been hard upon them, that I may make them amends out of my lands and goods; or if these be not sufficient, that thou wilt punish me here in this world, and not let my poor soul suffer in the world to come." This Henry of Einsiedel had inherited from his ancestors some villages, which had once belonged to the church, and scruples of conscience arose in his mind concerning the treatment the inhabitants had received from his immediate predecessors.

It was, indeed, certain that the peasants had formerly been compelled to give a greater amount of labour to his ancestors than he had ever demanded of them; and in other respects he had endeavoured, as far as possible, to lighten the yoke laid upon them. Still he did not feel satisfied, and applied to Luther for advice in this case of conscience.

His scruples received no encouragement, however, and he was told that there was nothing wrong or unchristian in compelling the peasants to labour for his benefit, provided he treated them well. For the moment, this decision of so great an authority seems to have contented him; but after a while doubts arose again, and he now applied to Spalatin, the celebrated secretary of Frederic of Saxony, with the request that he would again speak with Luther concerning the matter; and this time the opinion was given in more decided terms, "that it was not well to relinquish one's rights, and that the common man must be laden with many burdens, or he would grow restive." In this view of the matter Spalatin entirely coincided, suggesting by way of comfort that he had not devised the system of forced labour, and reminding him as a case in point, that Joseph had demanded one-fifth of the whole produce of the land of Egypt.

If the lord of Einsiedel should still find his conscience troublesome, he was recommended to make matters even by doing some extra good to the poor, but by no means to think of abolishing the system of forced labour, for all

innovation was attended with difficulty and danger. At worst, he could surely repeat some consolatory psalm. One must not be too scrupulous, "there will always be something wrong as long as the world stands."

All this did not seem quite satisfactory ; for Herr von Einsiedel had been in real earnest in his conscientious doubts ; but after the decision had been given against him from such a high quarter, what could he do but ascribe them to the suggestions of the devil, against which he must fight with prayer and other religious exercises ; but it is worthy of remark, at the same time, that he finally assigned in his will a portion of his revenues to the relief of such of his vassals as might appear to be overburdened with taxes ; a disposition which Spalatin advised him by all means to keep secret lest his people should presume upon it. Noble Herr von Einsiedel, may he rest in peace ! We shall not look upon his like again ; but, on the contrary, on more than one noble who complacently signs himself the "Peasants' Foe."

Immediately on the publication of their twelve articles the peasants sent them to Luther for his approbation, in the fullest confidence that the man who had spoken so eloquently of Christian liberty, and who had found in the Bible the justification of his defiance of the highest authorities upon earth, would fully approve of their undertaking. Luther, however, found himself in the greatest embarrassment. Nothing was farther from his thoughts than to be or to profess himself an apostle of civil liberty, and the general inclination to regard political regeneration as one of the necessary consequences of the doctrines he had advanced was the most unwelcome to him. He could not appear either to sympathise with the peasants without danger of offending the nobles and princes, on whose protection he knew he could rely when he defied the Pope and the Emperor.

He therefore adopted what was unusual with him, a middle course ; published an exhortation to the rulers to amend their conduct and give the poor man room to live ;\*

\* Even in this letter, however, he dwells more on the offences of the lords spiritual and of those princes who had shown themselves hostile to his doctrine, than on that of the greatest tyrants and oppressors.

and another to the peasants, which, though beginning in a friendly tone and acknowledging their grievances, gradually modulated into a different key, and finishes by preaching vehemently the doctrine of passive obedience and unconditional submission. "It is written," he says, "that they who take the sword shall perish by the sword, and that every soul shall be subject under the powers that be with fear and trembling; that the excuse that the conduct of the rulers had been bad and intolerable; that they would not allow the Gospel to be preached; that they were guilty of every kind of tyranny; and that the bodies and souls of their subjects were destroyed under their dominion, *all this was no excuse for insurrection!* Both divine and human law agree in this, that no man shall be judge in his own cause, nor seek to avenge himself; for 'vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.' You cannot deny that in this insurrection you have been seeking to avenge yourselves, and have not been willing to suffer wrong. Should you persist in your undertaking against your lords, since you have the law both of the Old and New Testament, and also the natural law against you, you ought to be able to show a new and special command from God, which he had confirmed by signs and wonders. \* \* \* You see the moat in the eye of your rulers, but see not the beam in your own. St. Paul says, to do evil that good may come of it is deserving of everlasting damnation. Your rulers have done wrong in refusing to allow the Gospel to be preached to you, and depriving you of your temporal goods; but much more do you do wrong that you do not trust to God's Word alone. Cannot you see, friends, that if you are right in what you have done, any man may become judge over another, and neither power nor authority, law, nor order subsist any more in the world, but only murder and bloodshed? Thus much," he continues, "is merely divine and natural law, that even Jews and Turks acknowledge; but the Christian, and especially the evangelical Christian, is bound to much more. Does not Christ say, 'Resist not the evil: whosoever will compel you to go with him one mile, go with him twain; whoever will take your coat, give him your cloak also; whoever strikes you on one cheek, turn to him

the other?' Suffer! Suffer! the Cross! the Cross! that is the law for the Christian; that, and no other." In order to anticipate the reproach, to which he could not but see he was liable, of not having been himself altogether so meek and peaceful as he exhorts the peasants to be, Luther asserts that he never had drawn the sword and had occasioned no insurrection; but it is difficult to believe that he could really be so short-sighted as not in any degree to foresee the inevitable consequences of the movements which, in the following century, deluged Germany with blood, and all but threw it back into a state of barbarism. After throwing firebrands under the straw roof, it was to little purpose to cry out to the owner of the house, of all things, to beware of fire.

He recommended to the peasants, that for the peaceable settlement of their grievances a committee should be appointed, of nobles, and the patrician senators of free cities; but whether this proposal was fairly meant or not, we cannot wonder that they saw little hope for them from a tribunal so constituted, and that they now turned with deep disappointment from the man who preached to them principles far as the poles asunder from those on which he had himself declared war against Pope and Emperor, and repeatedly refused obedience to the authority even of the Diet of the Empire.

That Luther did not occasion the Peasant War, and would most gladly have put an end to it, is certain; but it seems equally so, that the efforts which he and many other reformers had long been making to bring the monasteries and the Romish clergy into hatred and contempt, were in a great measure the cause of some of the worst excesses that attended it.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## A BRIEF TRIUMPH.

THOMAS MUNZER had continued for some time to wander about Southern Germany, preaching wherever he could find an opportunity, but often hunted from place to place, and not knowing whither to turn. At length he had reached Muhlhausen, a free fortified city of ten thousand inhabitants, with jurisdiction over twenty villages and hamlets, on which, on account of some popular movements that had taken place there in 1523, his eyes had long been fixed.

It happened that one Henry Pfeiffer, a monk, who had left his convent after the example of Luther, thrown off the dress of his Order, and began to preach to the people, had lately made his appearance there, and excited much attention. It was on a Septuagesima Sunday, when the town crier had just been proclaiming from a high stone in the market-place where beer and wine was to be sold, that Pfeiffer leapt on the stone as soon as the crier had left it, and calling out, "Hear me, Burghers, and I will tell you where you may get another kind of drink," began to preach in very vehement style on the Gospel for the day, and the sins of priests, monks, and nuns. The people stood still, and listened eagerly, and others came running up from all the streets around, till a considerable crowd was formed; and at the conclusion of his sermon he promised to preach again from the same spot on the following day. This time, however, the senate became alarmed, and sent to summon him to the town hall: he answered that his business was to preach; but that, when he had finished his sermon, he would come. He required, however, a safe conduct; and when this was refused, he returned to his stone, and called out, "Whoever will remain true to the Gospel, let him hold up his finger." Up rose immediately the hands of assembled thousands, men and women, young and old, and they swore to remain "true

to the Gospel," though what they meant, or what they imagined they meant by that oath, does not seem very clear. A second preacher, known as Master Hildebrand, now made his appearance, and on being refused the permission, he had asked to preach against indulgences in one of the churches, went to a house in the suburbs, and held forth from the roof. Both these men were zealous disciples of Thomas Munzer, and in this manner the people had been prepared to afford him a more friendly reception than he had mostly met with : as soon, therefore, as his arrival was known, he was called on to preach, and, notwithstanding a warning letter from Luther, the Senate were afraid of refusing the permission. It was found insupportable, however, that he should make civil as well as religious liberty his continual theme, and talk about a General Christian League against the princes and oppressors of the people, in which he called on the Senate of Muhlhausen to join. They took courage, therefore, and forbade him to preach ; but thereupon a great commotion arose in the town ; the people came thronging in from the villages in such numbers, that the Senate had to order the gates to be guarded, and all night long the streets were filled with a restless crowd loudly uttering opinions by no means complimentary to their rulers, or likely to quiet their nerves. In the morning, many of the patrician families thought it advisable to leave the city ; and, in a meeting of the Common Council, Thomas Munzer was chosen for their chief pastor, and seats in the Senate demanded for him and his friend Pfeiffer. This was of course refused, and then the Council manifested still more decidedly revolutionary tendencies, held "monster meetings," and declared their resolution to have a new and more Christian municipal government, the populace in the mean while surging round the Senate-house and threatening to effect the change of government in a summary manner, by throwing the old one out of the windows. Under such inducements to a quick dispatch of business, a new Senate was elected in an unprecedentedly short space of time, and in this body most of Munzer's friends were included, whilst to himself the chief place was assigned. This, his solitary triumph, he gained on the 17th of March,



1525, and he immediately set about to reduce to practice, as far as possible, the doctrines he had taught, and in which, however mistaken, he was evidently sincere. Like the Puritans of England, more than a hundred years afterwards, he wished to make the Bible not only the rule of private life, but the foundation of civil government, and on this subject he spoke daily in the Senate, dwelling also much on the inward revelations which he believed were vouchsafed to him, the people hanging on his words as on those of a divinely-inspired prophet. He had before taught that to please God, men must return to their original condition of brotherly equality, and he now urged that there should be community of goods, as it existed among the primitive Christians. But it does not appear that he attempted or wished to extend it further. Many of his disciples obeyed the injunction, and shared with their poor brethren at least as much of their worldly possessions as was required to supply their real wants. The rich fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and made daily distributions of articles of real necessity, such as corn, and common stuff for garments. Munzer's own dress was a simple cloak or coat trimmed with fur, such as was then worn by citizens of the middle class in many parts of Germany; but a beard of venerable length and magnitude gave a sort of patriarchal air to his youthful features; for we must recollect, in extenuation of Munzer's errors, that his age was still only about twenty-seven. "A great moral earnestness dwelt in him," says one of the few who have endeavoured to rescue the memory of this unfortunate reformer from the calumnies heaped upon it, "and on the severity which he exercised towards himself, his power over the people mainly rested. Before him, a young man and a stranger, the usually proud Burghers of this free imperial city bowed humbly down. An eye-witness (Sebastian Franck) declares that the people stood so much in awe of him, that long after his death they felt always as if his eye were upon them. His enemies, against their will, afford the same testimony; Melancthon and Luther involuntarily bear witness to the force of his character and the might of his personal influence. Even long after his death, they seem when

they write his name as if they expected he would appear before them, or looked to see his handwriting on the wall.”\*

Melancthon states that Munzer lived at Muhlhausen “in all manner of luxury and profligacy, like a great lord,” for more than a year, whereas he really passed there only eight weeks (from the middle of March till the 12th of May) ; and the other part of the statement appears to be just as carelessly made. Those who knew him well declare that his habits of life were simple and austere, and that he was tenderly attached to his wife ; and of this last fact there is at least corroborative testimony in his having remembered, and anxiously provided for her amidst the anguish of torture to which he was subjected, and in the immediate prospect of an agonizing death. A course of horrible hypocrisy and licentiousness, such as has been attributed to him by the Wittenberg theologians, could hardly leave so sound a spot in the heart.

There seems to be no doubt that Munzer's intentions were not peaceful ; that it was his purpose to draw the “sword of the Lord and of Gideon” against the oppressors of his people, and after all the bitter experience the peasants had had of the temper of their rulers, they at least could hardly be blamed if they listened to this dangerous counsel from one who had shared and sympathised in their sufferings, rather than to Luther's praises of the divine right of princes and nobles, and his declarations of the perfect consistency of Christianity with slavery. The doctrine of unconditional submission to the powers that be, which he was perpetually preaching to the peasants, sounds, it must be confessed, rather oddly from one who had defied the highest and most sacred authorities on earth,—“Cæsar,” no less than the pope. There was, indeed, by this time a general feeling among the people that he had betrayed their cause ; and in the storm that was now raging through all the districts of southern and central Germany, that voice, once so mighty, passed by them “as the idle wind that they regarded not.”

\* Dr. Zimmermann, in his “Allgemeine Geschichte des Grossen Bauern Krieges.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## WARS AND RUMOURS OF WARS.

PATIENTLY and in good faith had the peasants waited the result of the negotiations, as long as it was possible to believe that they were seriously meant. But when they saw the preparations for war going on with the greatest activity and vigour,—when they heard from day to day the language of the nobles becoming more insolent, and that their talk was of nothing but unconditional submission on the part of their vassals,—their hearts became embittered, their confidence in the good intentions of their rulers changed into rage and indignation, and the more violent and impetuous spirits among them found it easier to excite them to acts of outrage.

In the course of the last eight days of March, 1525, the whole country round the Upper Danube was kindled into a flame. From the Black Forest to the Lech—from the Alps to the heart of Franconia—alarm-bells were sounding, armed men mustering, and in Leipheim a great peasant camp was formed, over which waved a blood-red banner, and which soon resounded with the din of war. The gold and silver plate in the churches and monasteries was now seized, for it was absolutely necessary to find some means to meet expenses, and their enemies had an almost unlimited command of money. News came that George Truchsess was advancing upon them, and immediately several of the castles were attacked, plundered, and burnt to the ground. In general the serfs belonging to each estate were foremost in the assault; taking out and distributing the stores of corn, wine, and other provisions, emptying the ponds of fish, and at last applying the torch that sent the message of vengeance in characters of flame along the sky.

George Truchsess, who was now in the field, seems still to have avoided making any decisive attack upon them; for, indeed, they were divided into so many small parties

that it was not easy to attack them to any purpose ; but he committed reprisals by burning villages and towns, without making any nice distinctions in favour of the few who had not yet joined the insurrection. So many of the people's cattle were carried off by his soldiers that at one time cows were selling in his camp at a half-penny a-piece.

On the side of the peasants there was obviously the most deplorable want of guidance, or of anything like a fixed plan or settled purpose. They rambled about in greater or less parties, doing in general rather what might be called mischief than serious damage to their enemies, and sometimes abandoning for no apparant reason undertakings successfully begun. A considerable body of them had made their appearance before the town of Weissenhorn, demanding to be admitted, and furnished with meat and drink, but offering to pay for it. The demand was refused, but they moved away without attempting any violence, and proceeded to ransack some priests' houses in the neighbourhood which had been deserted, and carry off what they could. One, whose late occupant had been known as an enemy of the people, they were about to pull down ; but on the entreaty of a woman they allowed it to stand, and no further harm was done, than the breaking of some doors and windows, and even that merely by individuals, and without the concurrence of the rest. As they returned towards Weissenhorn, ten of their number again went to the gates to demand an entrance, saying that as their enemies, "and even Jews and gypsies," were permitted to come in and get food for their money, they hoped as much might be done for them. They called on the citizens, however, at the same time, to unite with them as brethren, and help them "to defend the Holy Gospel." The Burgomaster, Diephold Schwarz, replied that the Holy Gospel had hitherto wanted no defence in Weissenhorn, and that the people had nothing to complain of ; and he entreated the peasants to remain on the terms of good neighbours with them, and promised that on their sides the city would do nothing to molest the camp at Leipheim. At the time same he had bread and wine brought to the gate,

and invited the envoys of the peasants to pledge him in a friendly cup, which they accordingly did ; one of them also taking the precaution to fill a bottle which he carried with the good liquor. Thereupon they returned to their brethren, promising to use their utmost good offices to induce them to withdraw ; but their brethren had not been drinking the Burgomaster's old wine, and were not in so amiable a mood. Angry cries arose among them on hearing of this second refusal ; they declared that if they could get in in no other way they would take the city by storm ; and sent back one of the messengers (the same who had filled his bottle) to say as much, and make a declaration of war. " Be it so," replied the stout Burgomaster ; " then let every fox look after his own tail. God and St. George for us !" and the preparations began on both sides.

The peasants soon got possession of some houses in the suburbs, and the firing continued till it grew dark, without any particular result. In the morning the Weissenhorners, of course, expected a renewal of hostilities ; but it seems that in the night, one cannot guess why, the assailants had moved off to attack the convent of Roggenberg, from which the ghostly fathers had fled with precipitation at the first news of their approach, so that the convent was an easy conquest. Troubling themselves little about the fast-day (for were they not mostly reformers ?) the peasants revelled, many of them for the first time, in flesh, and fish, and good old wine ; and this indulgence was fatal to the little discipline there was among them. Drunken boors broke the beautiful organ, battered in the pix, and other sacred vessels, and scattered them about the church, seized on the robes of the priests and the consecrated banners, and breaking into the library, tore up or carried away the books in which were inscribed the rents and dues of the convent lands ; and one declared himself for the night, abbot of Roggenberg, and was very merry with his comrades over the jest. The leaders, who took no part in these outrages, employed themselves in regularly emptying the storehouses and cellars ; and good store did they find of corn and wine, and venison and poultry, and utensils

of every kind in abundance. The monks themselves, as they were flying towards Memmingen, fell into the hands of a party of peasants, were made prisoners, and a debate ensued as to what was to be done with them. Some were for setting them free, others declared they would put them to death ; but the more humane counsel finally prevailed : they were dismissed in safety, and the peasants returned in high spirits to the camp at Leipheim.

The chief difficulty which presents itself in attempting to penetrate the mists which envelope these transactions is in the impossibility of following any one train of events, or of fixing our attention upon any one individual whose history may afford any leading clue to its tangled web.

We see a whole country covered with insurrection as with a raging sea ; but though here and there a wave will lift itself for a moment above the rest, it is only to sink again, and be lost in the weltering world of waters.

The interest which usually attaches itself to the character and fate of individuals, can here rest only on the common ground of humanity ; the unity is not of time and place, but of common effort and common wrong ; the cause is one, the effects are thousandfold, yet everywhere the same.

As also the strongest motive existed for keeping secret, as much as possible, the names of the actors, and as those who could afterwards have afforded explanations took care to keep their knowledge to themselves, many things are wrapt in impenetrable oblivion. No account of the Peasant War was, for obvious reasons, ever written by those who were best informed concerning it ; and of the hundred thousand peasants who perished, scarcely more than a dozen names have been recovered even by the recent elaborate researches of Dr. Zimmermann.

Of these, one of the most remarkable is that of one Wendel Hipler, one of the few embarked in that hopeless cause who possessed any thing like literary cultivation, or who seem to have been entitled by mental qualifications to take a leading part. He was for many years employed in the Chancery of the Counts of Hohenlohe, and was accused of having first joined the peasants in revenge for

some injury they had done him ; but the charge seems to rest on very slight foundations, and his whole conduct was far above what could have possibly resulted from such a motive. "He was," says Gotz v. Berlichingen, "as good a scribe as any in the whole empire, and a fine clever fellow." His views were far higher and more comprehensive than those of most of his party, extending indeed to nothing less than an entirely new organization of the empire, and the uniting all the scattered members of the German body into one great nation. Grand and far-reaching as were his hopes and projects, however, he possessed the clearest, sharpest insight into things that lay close at hand, and knew when to strike boldly and openly, and when to work in silence and darkness, and weave together the threads of an invisible conspiracy.

He was, it was said, a "duck who knew when to dive." Hipler had long ago quitted in disgust the Hohenlohe territory ; but as the tempest began to gather he was seen again among the peasants, whose confidence he possessed from having more than once interfered to screen them from the tyranny of their lords, and his presence became the rallying point for all the discontented.

A very different man was George Mezler, a keeper of a hostelry at which the meetings of the peasants had, at the instigation of Wendel Hipler, often taken place. Far inferior in character and talents to Hipler, he was yet one of the bold and determined spirits sure to recommend himself to those who above all other things needed resolute guidance. He had gone out with a drum and a shoe hoisted upon a pole, on the first rising, and the peasants had thronged about him, "like bees in swarming time." Through the thick woods that covered the heights on the right bank of the Tauber, they had come pouring down into the valley, and when several thousands of them had assembled, George Mezler was unanimously chosen as their captain and leader.

Another, whose name there has been cause enough to remember, was Jacob Rohrbach, or, as he was commonly called by his comrades, Jacklein, that is, Little Jack. He also had kept an inn or wine shop, and had acquired a considerable renown among his associates as a boiste-

rous jolly dog, who was never behindhand when any wild prank was to be played, or at a loss for pretences to justify it. Every one knew him for a rough passionate fellow, who was just as well inclined to fist law as any knight or baron of them all ; and he had, indeed, in 1519, sent out a written declaration of feud on his own account, against the inhabitants of a neighbouring village, and had been more than once brought before the tribunals for various acts of violence. A year or two afterwards a darker suspicion had come to rest upon him, as he was thought to have been concerned with some others in the assassination of a noble, Jacob von Olnhausen, and perhaps was not less acceptable to many of the peasants for having been supposed to have imbrued his hands in the blood of one who was universally regarded as an enemy of the people. His irregular dissolute life had not only dissipated the little property he had once possessed, but involved him deeply in debt, and nothing could be more welcome to him than the prospect of plunder and outrage opened by the Peasant War. In the latter days of March, 1525, all his preparations being made, Little Jack hoisted his flag in a village not far from the city of Heilbronn in Wurtemberg, and assumed the name of Captain of the peasants of the Neckar valley, sending summonses to the hamlets around, couched in very authoritative terms, requiring them immediately to join his troop and assist him to "uphold the Gospel," under pain of being plundered and burnt in case of refusal. He required his followers to take an oath to labour no more for their lords' benefit, to drive out monks and nuns from their convents, and to distribute amongst themselves the goods of the church.

Little Jack began his crusade in defence of the Gospel with a grand carouse, in which he emptied the fish-ponds on an estate belonging to the Teutonic Knights, and then proceeded to visit the ecclesiastical dignitaries of the country round ; an honour for which they had to pay dearly.

He usually went about with drums and fifes, and accompanied by a priest named Beltelin of Massenbach, who preached with a tongue of fire on the theme of evan-



gelical freedom. Conspicuous amidst all these, among them, but not of them, stands Florian Geyer, a descendant of the noble family of the Geyers of Geyersberg. "Born on the free airy heights and sunny hills of life," his forefathers had glittered in all the splendour of chivalry at the imperial court of the Hohenstauffens; yet he had voluntarily abandoned all social advantages, and joined the cause of the oppressed people. An air of melancholy mystery surrounds his name. Some speak of him as a mere adventurer, and little or nothing is known of his early life, or of the causes that led him to a career, so different from that in which his birth had placed him; but his conduct appears, afterwards at all events, to have been invariably that of a man of honour and high intelligence, and he remained faithful to the last to the cause which he must have long perceived to be hopeless. He had imbibed, it was said, with enthusiasm, the new political and religious ideas of the time; he was an accomplished soldier, and the band which he raised, called his "Black Troop," was the flower and kernel of the whole peasant force; on which, indeed, the said troop looked down with great contempt, as on an undisciplined rabble.

In Schönthal, where the various troops from the Oden forest and the valley of the Neckar were mustering, they were joined by Florian Geyer, besides receiving a friendly visit from another knight, our old acquaintance Gotz von Berlichingen of the Iron hand. It does not seem certain that he had not thought of joining them, for there were more points of sympathy between him and the peasants than might at first have seemed probable. He hated priests, hated rich city lords, hated princes and all despots, (overlooking the fact that the knightly order to which he belonged had often been among the worst of despots,) was delighted with the opportunity of overhauling the good things of fat abbots and lazy monks, and was often willing to espouse the cause of a poor man, if it were only for the pleasure of a quarrel with a rich one. His immediate business in the present camp was to make terms for his brother, whose vassals had joined the insurgents, and who was now shut up in his castle of Jaxthausen, about a German mile from Schönthal; and this, as he was a

favourite with the people, he found no great difficulty in effecting.

The territories of the Abbey of Kempten were by this time all in a flame, but the Abbot had gained the refuge of his strong castle of Liebetaun, where he had shut himself up; while the peasants attacked and took the Abbey. The monks were allowed to leave it, but the peasants took possession of all the treasures and stores found within the walls, the books out of the library, and all the chronicles and account books as well as the bells, which they carried off.

They bethought themselves also of their friends in the town of Kempten, and sent two pipes of wine for their entertainment from the cellars of their ghostly father. Another troop, which had visited the castles of Hohen-taun and Wolfenberg, returned to Kempten with a train of eighteen loaded wagons. Another party took their way to the town of Füssen, in the territory of the Bishop of Augsburg, and, declaring that they would no longer be satisfied with evasive answers, insisted on knowing whether the citizens would aid them in their attempt to procure "God's justice," or take the consequences of refusal. The citizens requested that the leaders of the peasants would let them know who were the enemies against whom they were levying war. The answer was, that the Bishop of Augsburg was their enemy, and as the town of Füssen belonged to him, and had refused, after repeated invitation, to give them any assistance, it might now look for a large party of unwelcome guests; and before the messenger returned to the city, he saw the peasants making preparation to keep their word.

A party of about two hundred men was dispatched by their leader, Walter Bach, to occupy the bridge over the Lech; others were sent to make a circuit, so as to be ready to attack the city on the other side, and he posted himself with a considerable body of the peasants on the road to Riedl, to await the arrival of another which was to join in the assault.

Two hours before daybreak, however, an Austrian captain with some troopers came up to those posted on the bridge, and declared that the town of Füssen had

placed itself under the protection of the Archduke Ferdinand, and that therefore the peasants could not attack it without violating their allegiance to the Emperor. The peasants were induced by this to pause in their undertaking, for nothing could be farther from their intention than to violate their duty to the Emperor; but they declared at the same time their belief that the story was a mere subterfuge, and that the town belonged all the while to the bishop; adding, that if it were as they stated, this interference of the Archduke was "contrary to the usage of war," an expression which, as well as many others they made use of, implies that they regarded their undertaking as legitimate warfare, and not rebellion.

By this time affairs began to look serious with the Prince Abbot of Kempten. At first he had felt himself comfortable enough in his strong castle, amply provided with all things needful and pleasant, with his friends and relations about him, his gold and jewels, and valuable papers, and precious relics, all safely stowed. Other nobles also had come hither for greater safety, and had brought with them stores and costly articles of various kinds, and armed retainers, so that it seemed they might laugh at the efforts of mere half-armed or almost unarmed peasants. But, by degrees, as news came that one castle after another had fallen into their hands, and the prospect of help seemed more distant than ever, the Abbot began to think somewhat anxiously of what was to be done.

He dispatched messages accordingly to the insurgents, couched in more gracious language than he had been accustomed to employ in his dealings with them, and offered conditions that would once have been joyfully accepted. But the peasants had no longer any confidence in his promises, and perfectly understood the cause of his change of tone. At last he and his fellow prisoners became unanimously of opinion, that they would do well to surrender the castle and all that it contained, for the security of their life and freedom only, and to this condition the peasants agreed; nay more, they allowed to the Prince Abbot, for his own use, two horses, ten silver goblets, the furniture of his bed, and three hundred florins; an instance of moderation and humanity to which we find

no parallel on the opposite side, although these were the men who were actuated solely by "a blind and insane fury and thirst of blood."

The Abbot and his monks were also allowed to remain without further molestation in the town of Kempten, but the castle of Liebetaun and all that it contained, arms and warlike stores, horses, armour, corn, wine, household utensils, vessels of gold and silver, and money fell into the hands of the people, and formed a valuable addition to their means of carrying on the war.

The town council of Kempten, who had witnessed the agreement made with the peasants, now came to escort the Abbot into their town; but notwithstanding this civility, they did not lose sight of so favourable an opportunity of making some profit of the misfortunes of their reverend father and liege lord, and they offered to purchase his rights over the city for a sum of 32,000 florins. The Abbot by no means liked the bargain, and made an attempt to escape from the city, in the unworthy disguise of a court fool; but the burghers were too cunning for him: he was caught, and vigilantly watched until he agreed to take their offer, which he finally accepted on the 6th of May, and on this joyful occasion, the city gave a grand entertainment, and feasted young and old with bread and wine and roast meat. The Abbot returned to his convent with his moderate competence, probably a sadder and a wiser man, and on finding himself once more safe within its sheltering walls, he returned the courtesy of the city, by giving a feast to all the guilds; a hospitality which, all things considered, certainly does him honour.

The alarm had now spread over the whole country; the nobles were flying from castle to castle, and those who remained, trusting to the strength of their fortifications, were mostly surrounded and closely besieged. The army of the Swabian League which had taken the field against the peasants, under the command of George Truchsess von Waldburg, had already more than once defeated their undisciplined forces with great slaughter; but still there was no symptom of abatement in the insurrection. A party of knights, whom he had sent off to relieve his castle of Wolfegg, found it impossible to reach it, and

were with difficulty able to fight their way to that of Waldsee, on the Lake of Constance, where they shut themselves up, and were glad when finally, by the mediation of the people of the town, they were able to purchase their release for a sum of 4000 florins (for which the town became security), and a promise never to fight against the peasants again. In the monastery of Salem there was, on the first of April, a great commotion among the brethren, for a report had found its way among them, that a body of peasants was coming to drive them out and destroy their convent. A messenger sent off in all haste returned, however, with the tranquillising intelligence that nothing of the kind was intended, but that the captain of the Lake troop would pass by on the following morning with three hundred of his men, who, as well as himself, would be glad of some breakfast, and accordingly, at the time specified, the troop made its appearance, and was entertained by the monks, the captain and his chief officers in the monastery, and the men at a neighbouring hostelry, and they went on their way rejoicing.

On their return, however, they thought it might be as well to call on the monks to fraternise, but granted them, upon entreaty, time for reflection, and passed on to summon the town of Markdorf to surrender, on penalty of being taken by storm in case of refusal. The citizens, in surprise, surrendered without firing a shot. Four thousand peasants entered and passed the night in the town, and the following morning the council, in the name of the city, took a formal oath to join their association. On the same day, the peasant host went on to the castle of Ettendorf, took it, left a garrison in it, and proceeded to Morsburg, the burgers of which came to meet them, bringing bread and wine, and offering at once to give up the city. The captain accepted the offer, and then sent off two of the troop to receive the oaths of the monks of Salem, who were now ready to join the fraternity, having asked and obtained the permission of their bishop to that effect. They were only required to swear to two articles, namely, to assist the peasants to "obtain God's justice, and to preach the gospel without additions of human device." How this last article was to be observed, it is

not very easy to make out, but the peasants were satisfied, and the monks, one of whom has given the account of the affair, acknowledged that they were well treated. The castle of Morsburg not having surrendered with the town, the peasants were now eager to storm it ; but their captain " Eitel Hans " exerted himself to save the fine building, and on condition that it should not be destroyed, it was finally surrendered, with all that it contained. The castle of Tettwang belonging to Hugo de Montfort, was next attacked and taken ; and after that, the town and monastery of Buchhorn were invested, both on the land side and by the lake ; but while the peasants were still lying before it, messengers arrived on a secret mission from the Archduke, and immediately, without any apparent reason, they suddenly drew off their forces. This was one proof, among others, that the Archduke had a secret understanding with some of the peasants. It was strongly suspected, indeed, that, now that they seemed likely to prosper, he was contemplating the possibility of making them subservient to a design of enlarging his hereditary dominions, by the addition of the beautiful country of Wurtemberg ; and the Swabian League had more than once given him to understand that they were aware he was playing a double game, and that if he did not show himself more in earnest, in assisting them to put down the insurrection, they would openly renounce him. There can be no doubt, nevertheless, that, whether he really harboured any such design or not, the effect of his interference was most injurious to the cause of the peasants, by occasioning still further division in their councils and uncertainty in their movements. In spite of all difficulties and obstacles, however, the affairs of the people began now to wear a brighter aspect : heavy clouds still encumbered the sky, but gleams of light shone out on many a spot. With the first days of April, the green glades of the Black Forest were all alive with animated swarms moving to and fro, high in hope, the captain of this troop, Hans, the miller of Bulgenbach, galloping about, in a scarlet mantle and cap with a high plume of feathers, or moving in leisurely procession, preceded by a herald bearing the twelve articles, and followed

by proudly waving banners, and wagons decorated by green boughs and streamers. The heralds, as they passed, summoned the inhabitants of all the villages to join them ; from every side recruits came pouring in, many cities opened their gates at once, and most of the castles surrendered or were quickly taken. In all fortified places, garrisons were left behind, and the main body of the Black Forest troop now moved on to Radolfzell, whither a great part of the nobility of Hegau had fled, taking with them their most valuable possessions, and enclosed it on all sides. Its position would render it a most important acquisition to the peasants, as it would enable them easily to keep open the communication with Switzerland ; but they did not as yet proceed to a regular siege, contenting themselves with laying waste the environs, and cutting off the supplies of the town. Even those coming by the Lake from Constance were intercepted. From the district of Ulm, the insurrectionary spirit ran like wildfire through the county of Burgau, to the Hardtfeld, the Ries and the Muhlgaue ; in which last lay the domains of the counts of Oettingen, the imperial cities of Noerdlingen and Bopfingen, and a great number of convents. There were also great estates belonging to the Teutonic Knights, on which there had been disturbances in the course of the past year, on account of the severe labour imposed on the people during the harvest, and for which they had vainly solicited to be paid only half the wages of hired reapers. In the town of Noerdlingen, the progress of the peasants had created a great fermentation, and meetings had been held in the house of one of the citizens, in which there had been talk of driving the nobles out of the Ries, and the monks and priests out of the town, and taking possession of both castles and convents in the name of the city. The lead was taken on these occasions by a certain Balthasar Gläser and Antony Forner, a man who had not only held some of the highest offices in the town, but had had much experience in matters of war. In his house, songs were sung in mockery of the Swabian League to which he himself added some very sharp verses, and in general it was said, whoever was most willing to speak against the League, and even the emperor, was most sure

of a welcome from Antony. During the present commotion, he found it no difficult matter to raise a party by whom he was chosen Burgomaster, and he soon ruled the town with almost unlimited authority. For both the great and the lesser council, new members were chosen, who were ready to support him in everything he proposed. Measures tending to confine within the narrowest limits the power of the patricians were carried, not without violence ; he was in constant and active communication with the leaders of the troops of insurgent peasants in the neighbourhood ; he sent them supplies of wood, corn, money, and ammunition, and would fain have sent also all the cannon out of the city, in order to forward his favourite project of ridding the land of castles and convents. He was often heard also to hint that strong measures would be necessary, and striking his breast and looking up to heaven, to declare that much blood must flow.

There can be little doubt, that genuine sympathy with the wrongs of the people was not the force that set Antony in motion ; and it was one of their misfortunes, that they had either not sufficient discernment or not confidence enough in their own strength, to reject allies of this character.

The Bishopric and city of Bamberg had been for some time past kept in a state of great excitement by the preaching of the reformed doctrine ; but as the preachers were men of acknowledged talents and learning, and stood in high favour with the people, the Bishop had hitherto refrained from interfering with them, although it could not be supposed that he looked with a very favourable eye on their proceedings. It happened, however, that he was at this time compelled to call together the equestrian order of his subjects, to assist him in furnishing the contingent of troops required from him by the Swabian League ; and one of the letters sent out for this purpose having accidentally fallen into the hands of a very zealous partisan of the reformers, a report arose that the Bishop was going to bring his armed knights down upon them, to attack them while they were engaged in divine service, and seize their beloved preachers.



A crowd began to assemble in the market-place, between eight and nine in the morning, on the 11th of April ; and soon the alarm-bell was heard ; some rushed to the city gates, and locked and barred them, and the citizens armed themselves hastily, and chose a committee from amongst themselves. The town-council sent off in great terror to the Bishop, and three of his most confidential officers instantly came down to endeavour to appease the people, and induce them to wait for a peaceful explanation ; but the movement party had now the upper hand, and would listen to no remonstrances, but dispatched messengers to all the villages round, calling on the peasants to join them. The Bishop made his escape from the city, and reached the strong castle of Altenberg ; which was, however, in a state entirely defenceless, and destitute of provisions. There was no one in it, indeed, but an old steward, a warder, and one or two serving men, who had been in the habit of carrying up the steep hill every day, from the town to the castle, whatever was required for the subsistence of its few inmates : a sufficient proof that the Bishop had not been nourishing any hostile projects against his subjects.

The citizens of Bamberg in the mean time hastened to put themselves into a state of preparation for the attack they expected. Barriers were erected, and chains thrown across the roads ; trenches dug, and the dignified clergy and nobles who had been taken in the city, compelled to work at the defences with the common people. The Bishop applied for help to the Swabian League, but they were too busy in other places to afford it him ; and he therefore at length saw himself compelled to accept the invitation of the citizens, and under a safe conduct from them, on the Holy Thursday, re-entered the city.

At the gate of the convent of Carmelites, he was met by an armed throng, who addressed him, declaring that they would have no other lord than himself, and calling on him to take possession for the common good of the lands of the clergy and nobility. The Bishop, in great astonishment, replied, that it was out of his power to comply with such a demand ; and passed on, under the care of his escort, between close ranks of armed men,

whom he addressed in a friendly manner, but received no other reply, than that their fellow citizens in the town-hall would speak with him. Here, however, he had to hear a repetition of the proposals made to him at the Carmelite convent. The estates of the Church and the nobles were to be seized on ; and the castles of the latter destroyed, since they served no other purpose than to endanger the liberty and property of the people.

The Bishop answered, that such a step would be, not only contrary to reason and justice, but also against the "perpetual peace" of the Empire, and that he neither could nor would do any such thing. The committee entreated, threatened, but the Bishop remained firm ; and he was at last reconducted to the Castle of Altenberg, and the people prepared to take the law into their own hands, and execute their own behests upon the castles and abbeys. They also broke into the office, where the state papers of the Bishopric were kept, seized on all the acts and registers, and tore to atoms these evidences of their enslaved condition : for two whole days the business of destruction and plunder went on unceasingly ; the beautiful cathedral was protected from injury, but the convents and even the houses of the clergy were torn down.

A new negotiation was now opened with the Bishop, and it was agreed that a council should be summoned, to consist of eighteen members, nine to be appointed by the Bishop, six by the country people, and three by the city, before whom a written statement of grievances was to be laid ; and, pending the negotiation, no demand for tithes or tax was to be made upon either peasant or citizen ; but from the number of members to be chosen by the Bishop, the clergy were expressly excluded. On Easter morning, cannon from the castle, and the bells from all the churches announced the victory of the people ; and, after eight days discussion by the council, it was declared, with the consent of the Bishop, that the word of God should be preached throughout the bishopric, "pure and free from any human additions, in pursuance of the constitution settled between their most reverend prince and lord the Bishop, and the council." Not a syllable was

said of the authority of the Chapter ; and the temporal dominion of the priesthood in Bamberg, may therefore be considered to have terminated with the proclamation of this edict. Here then, at least, insurrection had borne fruit.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE CATASTROPHE OF WEINSPERG.

IN this 'same Passion Week of 1525, in which the people of Bamberg celebrated their triumph, a scene of a different kind was passing at no great distance, in the lovely valley of the Neckar. The town of Neckarsulm had opened its gates to the peasant forces, and the rich possessions of the Teutonic knights had fallen into their hands. Some were quartered in the town, the rest lay encamped in the fields and meadows that surrounded it. A few miles off lay the town and castle of Weinsperg, in which latter dwelt the Count Ludwig of Helfenstein, a young knight of seven-and-twenty years of age, a favourite of the Archduke Ferdinand, and married to a natural daughter of the late Emperor Maximilian. As it was thought there were many in the town who bore no good will to the Count, a garrison of seventy knights and men-at-arms had been dispatched to Weinsperg early in this month ; but they had scarcely arrived when he wrote to the Imperial government that they were entirely insufficient, as a body of six thousand peasants was advancing from the Oden Forest and Hohenlohe. Two days later he wrote again, still more pressingly, for men and money, but no help came. The peasants arrived before the castle, summoned it to surrender, and called on the knights and nobles within to join them in a bond of Christian fellowship ; and the Count, knowing that his only chance was to gain time, affected to listen to their proposals, at length induced them to retire, and then,

making a sudden sally upon their rear, killed and wounded a great number. It now appeared, also, that on his recent return from Stuttgart, the Count had seized and cut the throat of every peasant that he met on the road. It could hardly be but that thoughts of revenge should arise in their hearts, when they heard of these things; and, while they were still brooding over them, news arrived at which the smouldering fire burst into a flame. George Truchsess von Waldburg had lately gained a sanguinary victory over their comrades on the shores of the Danube. Hundreds of them had been massacred or driven into the river, even after all resistance had ceased; and one Jacob Wehe, a teacher and preacher much beloved by the people, had been put to death in the most summary manner. To many of the coolest-headed amongst the peasants, it seemed now desirable, as a matter of policy, to show that they could make reprisals; the more impassioned among them deemed that the blood of their slaughtered brethren cried aloud for vengeance.

On the evening of Good Friday, angry swarms were seen moving rapidly across the bright green meadows between Neckarsulm and Weinsperg; and messengers arrived with letters addressed to the Count of Helfenstein and the Burgomaster of the town, the contents of which are not known, but it appears probable that they contained the ultimatum of the peasants. A haughty and contemptuous answer was returned by the Count; but the people in the town of Weinsperg were very little inclined to risk their lives in defence of the castle, which they would much rather have pulled down; by their help, a woman contrived to escape, and brought word to the peasants at Neckarsulm that there were many willing, not only to open the gates of Weinsperg to them, but even to show them where the castle might be most easily stormed. In the middle of the night, the Count was awakened by the intelligence that the peasants were all in motion, and before daybreak there was mustering in hot haste, both in castle and town: armed knights and nobles came clattering into the little market-place, where, also, the Count made his appearance, and endeavoured to animate the people to the defence, assuring them that

succours would certainly arrive before the day was over, and that, in the meantime, he had left his wife and children in the castle, and was ready to share with them the fortune of the day. The gates, walls, and defences were soon all manned and in complete state of preparation, but as yet no peasants were to be seen. The hour of divine service approached, and many knights and citizens went into the church and received the sacrament; the Count, also, and some of the nobles heard mass, though the priests showed some inclination to shorten the ceremonies a little, but before, with all their haste, they could conclude, word was brought to the Count in the church, that groups of peasants could be seen coming over the hills, and that they appeared to be followed by a larger body. The warders would fain have sounded the alarm, but the Count forbade it, fearing to create anxiety in the minds of the inhabitants. The men were ordered to their several stations, cheered and encouraged as much as possible; even the women and girls had a task assigned them, that of carrying stones and placing them ready to hurl on the besiegers. From the castle and the ramparts of the town, many anxious eyes were now fixed upon a hill, immediately opposite, called the "Footstool," for the ranks of the peasants were slowly rising above its topmost ridge, and soon appeared ranged in close military order upon it. Two heralds were now seen to detach themselves from the group and descend towards the town; they bore aloft a hat placed upon a long pole as the signal of a wish for a conference, and halting before the lower gate, they called aloud to those on the wall to surrender the town and castle to the Evangelical Christian Brotherhood, "if not, we beg you, for God's sake, to put out your wives and children, for both town and castle will be stormed, and no living soul within them spared." The townsmen knew not what to reply, and dispatched a messenger for the Count, but before he could reach the spot, one of his knights, Dietrich of Weiler, came up, and, declaring that the boors were nothing but gadflies, whom it was a disgrace for knights and nobles to parley with, any other way than with bullets, ordered some *men-at-arms* to fire at them. One of the heralds fell; but quickly

springing up again, ran back with his companion, though bleeding profusely as he went. The valiant knight, Dietrich of Weiler, pluming himself not a little upon this energetic proceeding—the shooting a peaceful messenger—declared they would now soon see the whole swarm run as those two had done. The Count Helfenstein, however, and the Burgomaster thought otherwise, and looked with some anxiety at the weak gates, and at the dark threatening cloud upon the hill. The Burgomaster proposed to block up the lower gate with materials that might be procured from the hospital, but the Count opposed this, as it would hinder the entrance of the troops which he expected.

The peasants had divided themselves into three bodies, and now stood silent, awaiting the answer that would be returned to their heralds. In front was Florian Geyer and his Black Troop, behind him a second division, and the rest of the body stretched out towards the villages of Erlenbach and Binswangen. The shots fired at their envoy, and the sight of his blood pouring out as he ran, served as the signal that at once set the whole mass in motion. Foremost came gallantly on Florian Geyer and his troop, to attack the castle, and the rest followed in double quick-time to make an assault upon the town; while a woman—called the Witch of Bocking, or the Black She-captain—screamed out her shrill denunciations of their enemies, and the charms that were to render their bullets harmless to the peasants, like one of the sorceresses of the old Northmen. From the walls and gates, and from the towers of the castle, a heavy fire was kept up upon the besiegers; and those who endeavoured to plant the scaling-ladders were continually crushed under the stones rolled down upon them. Still, more and more pressed on; and, though many were wounded, few were killed; but the storming party, under the command of "Little Jack," vowed to punish the Weinspergers for thus taking part with the nobles against them. Suddenly, through the fire and smoke, a peasants' banner was seen to wave over the castle: it was the signal of victory from Florian Geyer; the castle had been stormed and taken. Animated by the sight, the assailants of the town re-

doubled their efforts, and soon, amidst deafening uproar, the two outer gates were burst in, and only a single one remained, at which the peasants were now thundering with sledge-hammers and pikes, and such battering engines as they could muster. The courage of the citizens now began to give way, for, indeed, they had, from the first, had little heart in the business; there were even many among them who would willingly enough have taken the opposite side, and it was said that Little Jack had friends within the walls, who, in the confusion, were playing into his hands, and hammering at the inside of the gate while he attacked it from without. In vain did Dietrich von Weiler ride about to spy out such delinquents, and encourage those who were willing to fight: the people felt that they were about to be sacrificed to a cause which was not theirs, and Count Helfenstein was surrounded by a crowd of women, weeping, and imploring him to save them and their children from the death with which they were threatened if the resistance were prolonged.

The danger became more and more imminent; the voices of Little Jack and his companions could be heard threatening fire and murder; the citizens were becoming unanimous in their entreaties that the town should be surrendered. They began to drive the knights back from the walls, and to threaten with death those who should persist. The Count himself saw that it would be impossible to hold the place any longer, and ordered one of the citizens, named Schwabhannes, to hoist a hat upon a pole over the battlements of the lower gate, and to make an offer to give up the town if the lives of all within it might be spared; exclaiming at the same time, "Weinspergers, you have borne yourselves manfully, I will give you that testimony before God and the world." Some priests and others at the same time screamed, "Peace! peace!" from the walls; but the peasants shot the hat down from the pole and cried out that the townspeople might live, but that the nobles must all die. Schwabhannes entreated, at least, for an exception in favour of the Count, offering an immense ransom; but the stern answer came, "He must die, though he were made of gold."

A chill ran through the veins of the Count and his knightly companions, they cast their eyes round in despair: one only expedient remained, that of engaging the citizens to renew the defence, and then to make a sudden sally through the upper gate, leaving those who had no personal interest in the business, but had engaged in the quarrel solely in their defence, to be sacrificed in their behalf. (The honour of these knights and nobles was sometimes made, it would appear, of elastic stuff.) The project was whispered from one to another; they began to draw together; those who had dismounted sprang again upon their horses. "Where are my loyal Weinspergers," cried the Count; but his voice was drowned by the shrieks of the women, and the exclamations of the townsmen, who saw their garrison preparing to desert them. Their remonstrances were mingled with curses against those for whose sake only they had brought ruin upon their town, yet who would now fly and leave them to perish. But the hour of escape was past: as the nobles were struggling to force their horses through the throng, the gates were burst open and the besiegers rushed into the town, at the same moment that from an opposite point another troop poured down into it from the castle. With shouts and cries of vengeance they threw themselves on the steel-clad nobles, but called to the citizens, "Go into your houses with your wives and children, and no harm shall come to you." The burghers fled and barred their doors and windows; the nobles endeavoured to reach the church, the only spot where they could hope to defend themselves. Some were killed on the way thither, and in the churchyard; but a considerable number reached the church and shut the doors. These were soon burst open, however, and the victims pursued and killed even in the vaults. A small number, among whom was the Count, took refuge in the tower, where the great thickness of the walls and the narrowness of the passage made it possible for them to defend themselves for a short time, as more than one or two of their assailants could not ascend at a time. Even this narrow passage also was obstructed by the body of a knight who had fallen across it, with the sword with which he had been stabbed sticking in him; but as it was now evidently impossible to



escape, Dietrich von Weiler came out upon the battlements of the tower and offered large sums, as much as thirty thousand gulden, if only their lives might be spared. But a hoarse cry arose from the angry crowd beneath, "If you would give us tons of gold you must die;" and others shouted, "Revenge, revenge for the blood of our brethren, for the seven thousand slain at Wurzach!" At the same moment Dietrich von Weiler fell back mortally wounded by a shot in the neck. Others were stabbed by peasants, who rushed up through the tower; and, even before life was extinct, the bodies were flung over the battlements into the churchyard.

But some captains of the peasant host now made themselves heard through the uproar, and ordered that no more of the nobles should be slain, but that all should be taken prisoners; and, accordingly, they were bound with cords and brought down, Count Helfenstein among the rest: the whole business from the first assault upon the town not having occupied more than an hour, for it was not yet ten o'clock in the morning.

Since many saddled horses had been found about the streets without riders, the peasants rightly inferred that these had taken refuge in the houses of the townspeople, and they now proclaimed by beat of drum that such must all be given up, under severe pains and penalties; some were given up accordingly, but others escaped by the generous courage of their hosts. The peasants now wished to plunder the town, which they considered theirs by the right of conquest, almost the only right we may remember which their enemies had ever respected; and it was not without exciting great murmuring that their leaders were able to agree with them that only the houses of the priests, of the burgomaster, bailiff, town-clerk, and other officials who had shown particular zeal against them, should be given up to plunder, but that those of the other townspeople should be spared. At the same time it was made a condition with the burghers, that the wounded peasants should be carefully tended, and all furnished with wine and provisions as long as they remained in the town. The church, with all the sacred vessels belonging to the altar, was, however, plundered and destroyed;

the stores of wine in the castle were immediately seized upon, as well as other treasures which it contained. The peasants were seen hastening from it with rich silver goblets, silken robes and coverlets, jewels, and valuable articles of every kind, though they had rushed through the apartments with such eagerness as often to defeat their own object, and overlook much that was of great value. An old box that lay on the ground was kicked aside by many, till one taking it up found that "it was stuck full of rings and things."

The plundering in the town, even in those houses where it was permitted, was not carried on in quite so reckless a manner as in the castle; and, on one occasion, when a small sum of money was found in a little chamber, and a schoolmaster declared it belonged to some poor children, he was allowed to keep it. Thus passed the afternoon and evening, the greater part of the peasants lading themselves with booty, eating, and drinking, and rejoicing, as the strong old castle which had witnessed many a scene of oppression, rose in flames before them. A council was held in the meantime by their leaders, in which it was proposed that they should now proceed to Heilbronn, and endeavour to bring that city into their association; and then, having secured the valley of the Neckar from this side, should advance through Mainz into Wurzburg, destroy all monasteries, and drive out the bishops, the priests, and the chapter; but Florian Geyer declared that this would be insufficient to secure the freedom of the people unless the castles of the nobility were destroyed at the same time, since the temporal lords were even more their enemies than the spiritual. Fortified houses were of use only for purposes of tyranny; and "a noble should have but one door to his house any more than a peasant." Although by birth belonging to the privileged classes, he desired that there should be but one class throughout Germany; that of simple freemen.

Another member of the council, Wendel Hipler, was of a different opinion; he wished to bring over to the interests of the peasants the knights and lower order of the nobility, amongst whom, as is known, the evangelical doctrines had gained many supporters, and proposed with

this view to indemnify them out of the estates of the Church and the higher nobility, for the rights and immunities of which they were to be deprived. The great point, he thought, was to free Germany from the yoke of the princes, lay and ecclesiastical; and to this end the nobles and the peasants might make common cause.

While these discussions were going on, "Little Jack of Rohrbach," the most conspicuous among what may be called the "terrorists" of the peasant war, was brooding on darker, fiercer thoughts. In the middle of the night he called together some of those whom he knew to be of a similar way of thinking; and, in the mill where he had taken up his quarters, they held among themselves a debate concerning the fate of the noble prisoners. By a singular accident their proceedings were witnessed by a young squire of Dietrich von Weiler, who had been concealed there among trusses of hay by some women who compassionated his situation. The decision they soon came to was that no single knight or noble should be left alive; and in order that no one might interfere with their design, they proceeded to its immediate execution. At break of day, and while the greater part of their force was still sleeping off the effect of the day's fatigue and the night's revelry, Little Jack proceeded to where the prisoners had been placed, and had them led out to a field near the lower gate. The names of nineteen nobles are enumerated, without counting a few pages and esquires. A circle was formed, and they were led into the midst of it to hear their sentence. It was to an old and cruel punishment, hitherto never applied to any of gentle blood, but formerly common as a military punishment, in the case of persons of low rank; it was that of drawing up a file of soldiers in close rank, with pikes presented towards the criminal, who was then driven forward against their points. The unfortunate Countess of Helfenstein now came forth, with her infant son in her arms, and throwing herself at the feet of Little Jack and his comrades, implored, with tears, for the life of her husband, the father of her child; the Emperor's daughter, prostrate at the feet of men who had hitherto seemed like the dust of the ground, to exist only to be trampled on. Poor lady! most

true was it, as she afterwards said, that she suffered for the sins of many. There were those among that fierce throng who remembered how vain had always been the tears and supplications of their wives and children—how they had been starved and imprisoned, lashed and hunted like dogs at the command of her Imperial father and the nobles, the friends and companions of her husband. They had received no mercy, alas! they now showed none. At the command of Little Jack the peasants formed into two lines, and presented their pikes. A ruffian, formerly in Count Helfenstein's service as a piper, who had played to him as he sat at table, now came up, and snatching the plumed helmet from his head, and placing it upon his own, asked him if he would like a little music, and forthwith struck up a merry tune as the unfortunate man was driven forward against the pikes. He fell at the third step. It was a horrid scene. As the nobles were urged on, one after another, on their fearful path, cries were heard from the peasants, "You struck me at such a time, you rode over my corn, you did this and that." The body of the fallen Count was exposed to many indignities; the witch of Bocking and others plunged a knife into it, and smeared themselves with his blood. Rough cruel hands tore away the jewels and ornaments, and even the dress of the Countess, and wounded the poor infant in her arms. They then placed her on a dung cart, and drove her away, as the beams of the rising sun shone over the hideous scene of revenge.

Most frightful was it, but not more frightful than the torturings and murders which for centuries had terminated every struggle made by the people to throw off their cruel burdens—than the massacre of thousands of inoffensive persons by George Truchsess and the other nobles—than the putting out the eyes of eighty peasants by the Margrave of Anspach, and similar atrocities of which it would be too much to go through the sickening catalogue.

It appears also, on the evidence of the eye-witnesses by whom this sanguinary scene has been described, some of the squires, namely, who were not put to death, that scarcely more than a tenth part of the whole peasant force took part in it. It was not till it was too late that

what had been done became known to the rest of the body. A council was immediately called, though of what took place in it there is no record ; but one fact is remarkable, that from this time the name of Florian Geyer, the most high-minded and intelligent of their leaders, and his Black Troop, the most valiant and experienced of their soldiers, appears no longer in connection with this division of the peasant army. It is singular, also, that Little Jack, though apparently from an opposite motive, took his departure also soon after, affording a strong presumption that what he had done had rendered him unpopular with his brethren.

A cry of execration upon the deed resounded from one end of Germany to the other : from those who had looked on quietly enough when the blood of the "common sort," only was being shed ; but, though there can be no doubt that its effect was ultimately injurious to the cause of the peasants, and, that like other similar crimes it was even, in point of policy, a most fatal blunder, it is curious to find that one of its immediate effects was to produce a most rare effusion of civility from some of the nobles. Of the two young Counts of Lowenstein, who made their appearance in the peasants' camp shortly after, we need say little, for they came under manifest fear ; but the Counts of Hohenlohe hastened to send them, not only some powder and ammunition, which they had asked, but a very courteous epistle, in which they assured the peasants, that the reports of their knights and men-at-arms having shown hostility to single members of the brotherhood whom they had met, were entirely groundless ; that, on the contrary, they were strictly forbidden, under severe pains and penalties, to interfere with the peasants in any way ; and, that they, the Counts, would endure no one near them, who could so act, after the compact which they had signed and sealed. Many other nobles followed their example, and sent in assurances, more or less warm of good-will and friendly feeling.

## CHAPTER XXX.

## THE IMPERIAL CITY OF HEILBRONN.

THE Senate of the free Imperial city of Heilbronn on the Neckar, had felt themselves in an uneasy state of mind ever since the commencement of the insurrection. Four villages subject to the jurisdiction of their city had openly held meetings, and appointed a committee of their number to concert measures for obtaining the abolition of forced labour, and other grievances ; nay more, without leave asked, had sent off a company of their young men to join the standard of the peasants. A mob from some neighbouring land subject to the Teutonic knights had overrun their territory ; from their very walls the citizens of Heilbronn could see them ravaging and destroying the gardens and vineyards, and seeming to care very little for the shots fired at them.

The most alarming reports were daily brought in ; and, in the absence of certain information, the senate listened anxiously to every breath that blew from the disturbed districts. Soon they thought it expedient to send off a trustworthy officer of their own to reside at Ulm, and transmit to them from time to time such certain information as he could gather ; and joyful men were they, when their correspondent wrote them word of the defeat of a great body of the peasants ; that two thousand had been put to the sword, and fifteen hundred drowned in the Danube. The correspondent added, that "Thank God ! the war was now over ;" and this good news was eagerly echoed from mouth to mouth. In the wine shops, however, where men talked over the news, there were some who could not be brought to agree in this opinion ; but insisted that they would yet hear more of these peasants, and even hinted that, perhaps, the rich citizens of Heilbronn might have to pay them tribute of their corn and wine, or even of their money.

On the Wednesday before Easter, news came that a large body of the insurgents was certainly advancing in

that direction, and beyond doubt intended to visit either Heilbronn, Weinsberg, or Neckarsulm ; but which could not be determined. The Senate hastily summoned the citizens to concert measures for the defence of the town. It was agreed that the city should be divided into four quarters, for each of which a quarter-master was to be appointed, and a certain number of men kept under arms ; and all were required to take an oath to stand by the Senate, and be obedient to it in all things whatsoever that was commanded, whether for watch or defence, under severe penalty. One senator, assisted by three of the commonalty, was to take the direction of affairs in each district ; and five persons skilled in the arts of war and fortification were appointed to see what could be done for the further defence of the town. But before these measures could be carried into effect, a missive arrived from the peasants' camp at Neckarsulm, addressed to the vine-dressers, the strongest of the guilds of Heilbronn, calling upon them to join the Evangelical brotherhood. The vine-dressers declined the invitation, saying it would be shameful in them, and contrary to their oath, to desert the Senate in this extremity ; but there were some burghers, in their own and other guilds, who were of a different way of thinking. The doctrines of the Reformation had made considerable progress in Heilbronn ; and a great deal of irritation against the Romish priesthood, had been excited in the minds of no inconsiderable number of the citizens. Others, also, looked at the matter on its political side, as a war of liberation, of the common people against the aristocracy. These were not always found among the poor and decayed class of citizens, who might be supposed to hope for profit from any change, but even among the most opulent and distinguished of the burghers.

We find the names of one Gutmann, a cloth-cutter, the proprietor of extensive vineyards, and corn-fields, and meadows, as well as of large sums in securities of various kinds, a cellar of the choicest wines, and a house that glittered with all the most costly decorations of the civic splendour of the time. There was " Hans Flur, the baker," who, besides mighty stores of wheat and barley, had a

great house furnished in the best manner from top to bottom, six pipes of wine in his cellar, silver goblets in his buffet, three vineyards and two farms of his own, and a whole sackful of securities ; not to mention a chamber, in which hung bright cuirasses, swords, and muskets, and all kinds of glittering harness : yet these great men were of the same way of thinking as their neighbour, Mathew Dantel, the butcher, who might almost have tied all his property up in a pocket handkerchief, and whose chief possession seems to have been a mattress and two pillows, on which six children were lying.

As soon as the Senate perceived that there were symptoms of disaffection among the burghers, they sent round two of their number to each guild, to inform them officially of what they knew perfectly well already, namely, that the peasantry of all the country round had assembled in an undutiful and rebellious manner, and without doubt harboured some criminal designs, though against whom the "Honourable Senate" had no means of ascertaining, but had sent to warn all their good subjects and faithful fellow-citizens in an earnest and friendly manner, to hold themselves aloof from all such doings ; for, that to be in any way concerned with the peasants, was evidently against their duty to the Imperial majesty and the holy Roman empire, as well as the subordinate principalities and powers, and the "highly praiseworthy" Swabian League, to which the city of Heilbronn belonged. It was remarked, that in this message the Honourable Senate, composed by one-half of the old patrician families of the city, and rather noted for the lofty aristocratic tone it usually assumed towards the lower order of citizens, now called them its dear and respected friends and brothers.

If the Senate had been in any doubt with respect to the intentions of the peasants, they were not kept long in uncertainty ; for they soon sent envoys, charged with five formal demands ; first, that they should be permitted to take into their hands the punishment of the Roman priesthood, that the Senate of Heilbronn should send them arms and ammunition, should swear to afford them further assistance whenever they might require it, should harbour no one who had any design against them, and



lastly, should accept and keep the twelve articles, and remedy whatever grievances the common people might have to complain of, a demand, it must be confessed, sufficiently comprehensive.

The immediate cause which had excited the anger of the peasants towards the clergy of Heilbronn, was that the Commander of the Teutonic order in that city had slain some of their brethren, and the culprit, well aware of this, now appealed to the Senate for protection. The Senate turned to the commonalty, who, however, would make no promises till certain conditions had been complied with ; and moreover, declared, that since priests and monks, and ecclesiastical persons, bore no part of the civic burdens, they were not entitled to civic protection. If, however, they were willing at this eleventh hour to obtain the rights of citizenship, by taking on themselves its duties, permission to do so should not be refused them. Sore perplexed was the honourable Senate, by the tone the commonalty had assumed ; for they saw in this small cloud the token of a coming storm ; and, before returning to this reply a rejoinder, they secretly sent off messengers to the Emperor's majesty, and the "highly praiseworthy" Swabian League, to make known the straits they were in. They then set about to compose a cautious answer, couched in as general terms as possible, in which, however they declared that, as their city was an imperial city and had avowed obedience to the Emperor, who had bestowed on the Teutonic knights many high privileges ; and also to the Swabian League, of which the Teutonic house in Heilbronn was a member, they could not refuse to it the protection of the city. To the other ecclesiastics they were also bound to afford whatever assistance they might require, but they would endeavour to obtain from the Imperial majesty an alteration of the laws which exempted them from civic liabilities. Foreseeing that their answer would not give satisfaction, the Senate manœuvred to get the different guilds to assemble separately in their various halls ; to each of which they sent one of their body to try what persuasion would do, and also to ascertain better who among them composed the disobedient and factious party, which it was thought was really a very small one.

They met accordingly, the vine-dressers, the butchers, the shoemakers, the tailors, the carpenters, the weavers, the grocers, &c., each in their purity, without admixture of any other trade ; but lo, it appeared, then, that the great majority of all the trades were prepared to insist on the conditions already named, and the plebeian part of the Senate itself, which consisted of members of these guilds, now seemed inclined to go over to the same cause.

As the fermentation in the city increased, and news came that the peasant host was drawing nearer and nearer to its walls, the Teutonic Commandant found it convenient to forget a promise he had made to the Senate when he was seeking their help, to devote his "life and fortune" and all the resources at his disposal, to their service, and secretly made his escape without taking a single step for the security of his order, or even going through the form of giving over the house to the protection of the town. The Senate had not more than a hundred lanz-knechts ; and, of the five hundred fully armed citizens, a considerable number was disaffected to their cause. Weinsperg, indeed, was not far off ; and there, as they thought, lay a body of knights and nobles under Count Ludwig of Helfenstein, with whom they were on friendly terms ; but just at this moment they feared he was in no position to afford assistance, having himself, indeed, sent to them with a request for arms and gunpowder. On Easter Sunday, he had said, he thought he would be able to grant them succours ; but when that Easter Sunday came it proved, as we have seen, to be the last which Count Ludwig of Helfenstein should ever see.

The tidings of the storming of Weinsperg came like a clap of thunder on the senate ; and those in the city, who had before shown themselves favourable to the peasants, now raised their heads and spoke out aloud their thoughts, and at the same time sent word to the peasant leaders, that they should make haste and come to Heilbronn, for that there were many among the burghers willing enough to open the gates to them ; hinting, also, that, should the "*Hochwürdigen Rathsherrn*" be inclined to shut them out, their thick heads should be thrown over the walls.

The honourable senate was not commonly very back-

ward to adopt severe measures towards such citizens as displeased it; but now, even for the most insolent and disobedient, who spoke out their sedition upon the market-place, there was no talk of beheading, whipping, or even banishing from the city.

A few hours more brought the certainty, not only that Weinsperg was taken, but also that the knights and nobles, and the Count of Helfenstein himself, had been put to death; and the panic among the party hostile to the peasants was, of course, greater than ever.

A messenger was dispatched to the peasants' camp, but the answer was only a vague recommendation to the "Rathsherrn" to do the best they could for themselves inside the city, as they, the peasants, would do out of it.

The senate was summoned in all haste, to consider what could be done; but the commonalty now insisted that a committee chosen by them should take a part in all the discussions, and that the honourable senate should do nothing without their consent.

Some of the citizens declared themselves willing to defend the city against the peasants, but, when called on to give proof of their valour and good faith, by sallying out to attack some detached parties of the enemy who were roaming about between the Heilbronn territory and Weinsperg, they refused, saying that they had among the peasants many good friends and kindred, and that they were, indeed, all Christian brethren.

A riotous mob came rushing up the steps of the town-hall, swearing they would have the key of the chamber of accounts, and see what an honourable senate had been doing with their money; some even were heard to threaten them with the fate of the Count of Helfenstein; and, though the pastor of St. Nicholas, one Dr. Lachmann, a favourite preacher of the reformed doctrine, succeeded by the magic of his eloquence in lulling the storm, it was obviously only for a time.

The Teutonic knights, and the clerical orders, now declared themselves willing, on any terms, to take on themselves the title of citizens; but the people cried out that it was too late, that they would not, for the sake of the Romish clergy, draw down on the city the whole fury

of the peasants, who now, on Easter Tuesday, were in full march from Weinsperg. Those sent out to reconnoitre said the insurgents had with them nine or ten pieces of artillery, large and small, and carried in the midst of them a large crucifix. The guns were partly got from Weinsperg, and partly sent by the Count of Hohenlohe ; but were not quite so formidable as they appeared to the reconnoiters, for, in reality, the peasants had no powder for them. Upon the market-place there was a great tumult : some were for trying to negotiate with the peasants, others for joining them openly ; the fewest held with the senate.

Orders were issued to close, barricade, and guard the city gates ; but one Heinrich Hinderer, who had been charged with the duty, came back with tears in his eyes, saying he couldn't do it for the women, who were threatening to kill him if he attempted it. To one of the senators, who himself went thither and exhorted the citizens to assist in carrying earth, and what was wanted for the barricades, they replied, that they would much rather work for the peasants. A wealthy burgher's daughter who had begun to comply with their request, was severely threatened, and told that the time was now come when all such gentry as she should learn to spin, like the poor. The men on the walls complained that some one had stuffed up the barrels of their muskets, or poured water down them, and scattered about or wetted their powder.

By incredible exertions the gates were at length got locked, and then many of the people screamed that the senate were going to starve them, for that they had nothing to eat or drink. The senate, who had not always been so indulgent, hastened to quiet these refractory subjects by sending for three pipes of wine out of the cellars of the Teutonic house ; but before they had done drinking it, the advanced guard of the peasants came in sight. A merchant of Halle passing by and asking whither they were bound, was answered, "To dance at the Heilbronner church wake."

Outside the gates they halted ; and since no better might be done, a few of the senators who were acquainted

with some of the leaders, ventured out to parley with them. Little Jack Rohrbach, the same who had been the chief actor in the scene of slaughter at Weinsperg, declared, that as they had come out in so friendly a manner, the peasants would do no harm to any one. Unluckily, while this amicable conversation was going on, some one in the town began to sound the alarm-bell, and some shots were fired from the walls. This suddenly snapped the thread of negotiation which the *Rathsherrn* had been so skilfully spinning; they rode back into the town and up to the walls as fast as they could, to charge those upon them, as they valued their lives, to leave off firing; but in the mean while, Little Jack immediately began to show what temper he was in, by attacking a Carmelite convent outside the gates, which he had just promised to spare for a certain stipulated pecuniary consideration. Some of the citizens of Heilbronn rushed out of the gates to join the peasants, though Hans Dregel, a venerable silver-haired old man, who had been Burgo-master the year before, sat by, and with up-lifted hands implored them to turn back, and defend their native city. Now and then one would turn back, because "the old man looked so pitiful," but the greater number passed on, without heeding him.

By this time, George Mezler had come up with the main body of the peasants, and sent a demand for provisions of various kinds. The honourable senate knew not what to do. Some of them looked "as if you could have knocked them down with a little finger;" at length, however, they took courage, and boldly refused compliance. The demand was repeated in a more peremptory tone, and this time supported by threats. Outside the city raged the peasants, inside boiled and fermented the commonality. The perplexed honourable senate found it good to send fifteen small casks of wine to Mezler's quarters. We find, however, what under the circumstances seems rather surprising, that it was all honestly paid for, and at the same time an order given for as much bread as could be baked; and about this it seemed now unnecessary to hesitate, especially as for this also ready money was offered. When these matters were

satisfactorily settled, George Mezler sent once more to demand admittance for his host, under the conditions formerly specified. Should they be admitted they would conduct themselves quietly; for they had no enmity to any one but the priests and monks; should they be refused, however, they would not fail to turn the city topsy-turvy.

The affair of Weinsperg had now given considerable emphasis to any threats uttered by the peasants; and, as the commonalty vehemently declared for their admittance, it was evident that there was imminent danger of an insurrection within the city in case of their refusal. The senate, therefore, sent in all haste to the Teutonic house to warn the inmates to remove all valuables with as much speed as might be; in which business at least the Rathsherrn would afford what help they could. The reply was that no orders had been received from the commander, but that the knights would beg from the city the favour of a little gunpowder; some of which was accordingly sent, though but a small quantity, for gunpowder was an article much in request just then.

Another attempt was now made to open a negotiation with the peasants; messengers kept passing backwards and forwards between them and the senate, but every moment seemed to increase the improbability of their being able to save the city. The confusion and discord rose ever higher near the gate; leading to Weinsperg were groups of men, and even women, engaged in violent disputes; one citizen struck at another with his spear, and in another moment he himself lay stretched in his armour dead on the ground. As soon as it became known that it was the object of the peasants to get possession of the convents and religious houses, there arose a cry that the citizens should seize upon them themselves. The senate ordered a division of the burgher-guard to march into the court of the Teutonic house for its defence, but they refused to obey; and the vine-dressers began to assemble, by beat of drum, upon the market-place, with the avowed purpose of seizing upon it for a hall for their guild. One convent they would give, they said, to the shoemakers, another to some other trade.

The senate had once more got the gates shut, but the peasants were thronging thickly close before them ; and of the burghers and hired soldiers who manned the walls, there were as many enemies as friends. A few of the words uttered have been preserved.\*

"Who will fire at the peasants?" said one to his comrade, Martin von Leyden, a young man of a higher class, as they stood together on a tower.

"I will," was the reply. "He that will join the peasants had better go out to them at once."

Just then two or three peasants came to the edge of the moat opposite to where they were standing, and one of them called out, "To-morrow I shall be burgomaster of Heilbronn."

"God forbid," replied Martin ; "I would rather hang you."

"Very well, I will remember what you say, Martin," called out the companion of the one addressed, and who, it seems, was a citizen of Heilbronn, who had gone out to the peasants, having left nothing in the town but a wife and four little children, an old bed, and a pitcher, Martin turned away and went in ; but as he went his own comrade remarked, "If you had fired at them, you should, have been thrown over the wall of the tower like Dietrich von Weiler." Another who had shown a hostile feeling towards the peasants was actually thrown over the wall, and that by a woman. As the peasants had come along from Weinsperg through the vineyards belonging to Heilbronn, the people of the town at work there had called out to them to be of good cheer and go on to the city, and they would soon join them. Now, while the parley was still going forward, on a sudden the postern in one of the great gates was opened, none knew by whom, a body of the peasants rushed in, and the town was theirs. As the throng poured in, it was noticed that the actors in the tragedy of Weinsperg still carried the tokens of their sanguinary deeds. One, a burgher of Heilbronn, bore a halberd still bloody, with pieces of hair and flesh sticking to it ; another wore a rich dress that had belonged to the Count of Helfenstein ; another, his cap

\* Acts of the Swabian League. Fascikel, 95 e.

and rapier ; another had on his head the plumed hat of Sir Dietrich von Weiler.

The leaders immediately passed on to the town-hall : and one was heard to say that he would go to work with the Rathsherrn in a way that should make them wish they were born swineherds. "We will throw the rogues out of window, and bid our fellows be ready below with their pitchforks to catch them." This feeling was, however, evidently confined to the individual, for no violence was attempted, and another reproved his expression, and asked what the old gentleman had done to them. On the market-place, one Hans Reyter stopped to harangue the people, and declared that they had not risen against the Emperor, but only for the freedom of the Gospel. Whoever was of the same way of thinking should hold up his hand ; and, immediately, up went the hands of all present. From the neighbouring city of Halle came also satisfactory intelligence : it was completely in the hands of the peasants, and they had induced the Senate and the citizens to take an oath to keep the town, day and night, open to "the Evangelical Brotherhood ;" they desired, also, that the clergy should be punished, and that the Senate should publicly present to them a quantity of fire-arms and gunpowder, that the city should raise a company of five hundred men to join the peasants, under the command of one of their own citizens, and bearing the standard of the city ; and that they should also accept the twelve articles. The last demand was immediately acceded to, the Senate as well as commonalty thinking, perhaps, that "oaths are but words, and words but air," became without hesitation, "the dear brothers and good friends of the peasants," but they hung back from the proposal of giving the powder publicly, they would rather allow the peasants to take it, if it must be so, they declined, also, to raise the company of soldiers, and it does not appear, though the peasants at the moment were masters in the city, that any evil consequence followed the refusal. The punishment of the religious orders was, in most cases, limited to pecuniary fines, the Carmelite convent was to pay 3000 gulden, that of St. Clara, 5000, and some others 200 or 300 ; and a portion of these was



afterwards remitted. The city itself was to pay 1200 gulden, partly in corn, partly in money, and was to permit any burgher who had a mind to do so freely to follow the peasant army. The Senate should also promise, in the name of the city, to take part in the projected great reformation of the Empire.

In the meantime, in the house of the Teutonic knights all was uproar and confusion. The utmost that the Senate could obtain was that the house itself should not be destroyed ; but the plundering was going on with the most resolute activity. Some of the Senators were sent down with a guard to watch that it should not be set on fire, but they could do no more ; men, women, and children, especially the vassals of the Order, were busying, running backwards and forwards, carrying or dragging along linen, silver utensils, corn, wine, and provisions ; in the great court, Jack Rohrbach had established a market where much of the booty was sold, and citizens and citizenesses, old and young, were seen hastening away, joyfully laden with capital bargains, which they had got in their dealings with the insurgents.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE PEASANTS AND THE KNIGHT OF THE IRON HAND.

THROUGHOUT Franconia and Swabia, the electorate of Maintz, and the countries of the Rhine, in Spire and Baden, and Alsace, and, on the other side, through Bavaria and the Tyrol, Carinthia and Styria, the people were everywhere up, and traversing the country in armed bands. Fulda and Hesse, Saxony and Thuringia, were also lit by the flames of insurrection. It now became evident to the clearer-sighted among the peasant leaders, that an object of the first importance was to improve the organisation of their force, which was as yet no army, but a mere irregular mass of men thrown together at random

from various parts of the country, marching, indeed, but not acting together; every village following its own leader, and pursuing its own objects, ill-armed and undisciplined, and without any regular means of support. A great point would be gained if a man could be found who could unite all these scattered elements, and concentrate upon one great effort the religious and political excitement existing among them, but which was now wasting itself on a thousand trivial and ever-varying projects. Wendel Hipler pointed out to them, among other causes of weakness, the disadvantage of their present arrangement, by which every man was required only to serve a certain time, and was often replaced by another just when he was beginning to acquire something of soldierly knowledge and discipline. He proposed, therefore, that this regulation should be altered, and the service continue at least to the end of the campaign. He also suggested that they should take into their pay some of a considerable body of lanzknechts who were wandering about the country in search of service, as their military knowledge and experience could not fail to be useful to the peasants. In spite, however, of all the eloquence with which he supported these proposals before the council, they were both rejected; to the first they refused to accede, because many had no idea of gaining any further advantage than that of roaming about for a few weeks, and returning home laden with booty; to the second, because they feared they might have to share it with the lanzknechts, who now withdrew, and were immediately taken into the pay of their enemies to be employed against them.

Wendel Hipler now proposed that they should endeavour to obtain for their leader some experienced warrior, whose reputation and character might command the respect of the whole body, and for this purpose suggested the possibility of inducing Sir Gotz of Berlichingen to place himself at their head.

There had not been, it is true, hitherto much more sympathy between the peasants and the order to which the knight belonged, than between sheep and wolves; indeed Gotz himself very complacently adopts this very simile for their mutual relation; and, when he sees a wolf

ravaging a flock, calls out "Good luck to ye *brother*, have at 'em." There were, however, at present many circumstances that made a coalition seem to both parties desirable; they had obviously the greatest need of each other. If the knights had little liking for the peasants, they had just as little for priests or nobles; and nothing was more welcome to them than that part of the peasants' plan, which involved the plundering and burning of convents and the appropriation of the goods of the Church. The affairs of the peasants had lately looked so prosperous, also, that many even of the nobles had professed a friendly disposition towards them; and even applied for and obtained letters of protection from the captains of the host, to insure the safety of their castles.

But the motive of these new friends was obviously fear alone; and, however prosperously things seemed to be going on, Wendel Hipler was probably well aware of the impossibility of success for the peasants, unless some other classes could be induced to make common cause with them. Gotz von Berlichingen was held in high esteem for valour and honesty, by both the knightly order and the peasants, and seemed, therefore, as likely as any one to effect a union between them; it is generally thought, indeed, that since his friendly visit to their camp, some secret negotiations to this effect had been going on between him and Hipler, but of this there is no proof; Gotz himself professes, in his subsequent justification of his conduct, that nothing was further from his thoughts, especially after the Weinsperg business; but as at the time this was written all was over, and his liberty and life depended on his clearing himself from the suspicion, his declaration can hardly be received without grains of allowance.

The peasants were now in possession of the country all round his lands, the sky was nightly reddened by the glare of burning castles, and he thought it high time, he says, to collect together his jewels and valuable papers, and send them for safety to one of the Imperial cities. The city, however, (its name is not mentioned) would not agree to afford any compensation for their loss in case it should be taken by the peasants, and he had to bring them back again. The nobles all round, and even his own

relations, were joining the insurgents; and, as a last resource, and the only means of saving his property, he wrote to the Elector Palatine, and offered to take service with him "even without pay;" but a little domestic intrigue it seems frustrated the negotiation. In the midst of all this commotion, Gotz's poor wife was lying in, and very naturally dreaded the thought of his leaving her, which he would probably have to do if he joined the troops of the Palatine. She, therefore, after much cogitation and consultation with her mother, who was also in the castle, hit upon a neat little plan for keeping her husband at home; namely, that of destroying the Palatine's answer, in which he had with great satisfaction accepted of Von Berlichingen's offered services. The Iron Hand was greatly perplexed at receiving no reply, and he had little means of putting his castle into a state of defence, for no men were to be had for love or money; he, therefore, found himself compelled to do what he says, "princes, counts, and cities of the Empire" were now doing, or meditating to do—namely, make terms with the insurgent peasants.

Ever since it had been found that the great body of the Lutheran reformers had resolved not only to hold themselves aloof from the people, but even in many cases to range themselves among their bitterest foes, there had been the most distracting differences of feeling and counsel among them. Some had altogether lost confidence in the righteousness of their cause, since it had been pronounced by Luther, to whom they had transferred all the blind faith and reverence which they formerly paid to the Church of Rome, to be, not the cause of God, but of the devil. They went on, because they could not go back, but would have been glad of any tolerable compromise; others had grown fierce and wild under their disappointment, and thought there was no better way than to make a reign of terror of it, and wring from the fears of their rulers what they could not obtain from their justice—an opinion partly justified by the apparently favourable effect of the cruelty at Weinsperg; and many there were, of course, as in such cases there always will be, who had never had any higher views than of revenge and plunder.

When, therefore, Wendel Hipler proposed in the council to choose Gotz von Berlichingen for the general of their forces, opinions were much divided; some agreed with him, that their cause would gain much in the general opinion by having a valiant and renowned warrior at their head, and that subordination and discipline were before all things needed among them. Others cried out, "What good did Gotz von Berlichingen ever do us? What do we want with your nobles? This is a Peasant War."

Hipler and his friends urged, not only the advantage they would be able to make of Gotz's services were he on their side, but the imminent danger there was, that if he did not join them he would be engaged by their enemies, in which case he would not fail to do them much mischief. The opposition bellowed forth, "Get hold of him then, and hang him on the next tree!" Ultimately, however, the noisy party was defeated, and a horseman was ordered to ride on to Gotz's castle of Hornberg with a message. In a short time down came the Iron Hand himself to the inn where the council was sitting, and, on the stairs, who should he meet but his brother-in-arms, Max Stumpf of Schweinsberg, who had been to fetch himself a letter of protection. Max congratulated him on the offer to be made to him by the peasants, but Gotz replied, "that he would rather the devil were their leader than he."

On the table in the room where they were sitting, lay the twelve articles, which Wendel Hipler "expounded to him like any preacher," and the proposal was then made in due form. Gotz begged, he says, to decline the honour, and urged his conscience, his duty to the Swabian league, and obligation to various princes and lords, and even offered a large sum of money as a fine for refusal, and at the same time to give his best services as mediator to obtain peace on favourable conditions; but the utmost he could obtain was to be referred to the great body of the peasants and their captains without. He rode out, accordingly, into the field and spoke to one troop after another, and some appeared to listen to his representations; but seeing the colours of the Counts of Hohenloe, and riding up to them, he suddenly found himself sur-

rounded by a large party of well-armed men, who, pointing their spears at him, threatened to kill him instantly if he refused to be their general. Strange enough, if true, for they could hardly hope much, one would think, from services so obtained. Even in this extremity he would, however, make no positive promise, but demanded another day to consider of it. This was, after some difficulty, acceded to ; he was released upon his oath that he would meet them again on the following day at the neighbouring village of Buchen, and rode home in a sad and sorrow-

On the following day he came to the appointed place, and found the whole peasant host assembled, their captains and the council, and also some men of consequence from Maintz, forming a ring in the centre. Gotz alighted and entered the circle, and, according to his own account, renewed his excuses ; at least, he said he would never be concerned in any such wicked action as the murder of the nobles at Weinsperg. The peasant councillors looked grave, and said, "What was done was done, or, perhaps, it never would be done." At length, after a good deal more hesitation, or coquetting on the part of the Iron Hand, he accepted the post of general, or leader, of the whole peasant force, but for four weeks only ; and stipulating that he should never be required to do anything unbecoming his honour as a true knight and a Christian. The little business on the roads with the merchants of Nurnberg and others, which he had carried on pleasantly and profitably for so many years, he evidently regarded as perfectly consistent with both. There were many who have asserted, both before and since, that all the excuses he had made to avoid the office now proposed to him were really but coy denials, intended to invite renewed solicitations, and that he was, at heart, well pleased with the course affairs had taken. But if, for a moment, his warrior blood did stir as he looked round on the forest of spears, and saw the wide valley filled with the tumult of war, and the thousands of sinewy arms placed at his disposal, it was, probably, but for a moment, and his whole subsequent conduct went to prove that his reluctance was genuine. He asserted, indeed, that he accepted the post

solely with a view to protect his order, and the nobles in general, from further injury, and that they earnestly entreated him to do so. If this were the case, he must, like many of his class, have had a different code of honour for his conduct towards the peasants from that which guided him in his behaviour to his equals; for to accept the office of their general merely for the sake of serving the interests of their enemies, looked a good deal like what is commonly called treachery.

A curious position, indeed, must he have found himself in, for it seems the peasants trusted him so little that they thought it necessary to keep the closest watch upon every movement he made; and he, on his side, complains that "every boy among them thinks himself as good as his captain, and will do nothing but what he chooses." A hopeful business they seemed likely to make of it together. There was a great deal of wrangling between them before it could be settled what they were next to undertake. Many of the peasants wished to march to Wurzburg, but Gotz, having more military knowledge, was better aware of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of their making any impression on the citadel—the Frauenberg—which was one of remarkable strength. He wished to march at once against the troops of the Swabian League; after one or two successful battles, he thought, the fortresses would fall of themselves. To this, however, the peasants could not be brought to agree; for they distrusted his motives in the advice, suspecting it was only to prevent the further destruction of the castles; and the only thing, it seemed, they were likely to agree about was, that it was desirable to levy involuntary contributions upon fat abbots. It was voted, therefore, unanimously, that they should undertake the *reform* of the convent of Amorbach, a monastery of the Benedictine order, founded in the beginning of the eighth century, and the wealthiest and most powerful of the Oden Forest.

On the 30th of April the whole body moved off towards the convent; Gotz, and the captains of the different troops, riding at the head; and, after them, the senators and officers of the city of Heilbronn, each at the head of

his own band. As soon as the foremost arrived under the walls, a messenger was despatched with a request, or a command, that the monks should assemble in the refectory, for that Sir Gotz of Berlichingen and the "Evangelical Brotherhood" wished to communicate with them concerning the reformation of their house. As the first step towards this reformation also, they recommended that all the money, gold and silver plate, and jewels, should be got together as fast as possible. The monks, when assembled in the refectory, denied that they had any considerable amount of money in the house, as they had lately been expending large sums in building and beautifying their convent; but they had one-and-twenty silver goblets, which they now brought and presented to Gotz and his comrades, with a request that they might be protected from further outrage; for the house was now completely surrounded by the peasants, and the cloisters were echoing with the clash and clang of arms.

The champion of Fist Law was, however, now too much in his element to be easily put off; he knew well enough that in the course of eight hundred years the brethren must have collected many pretty things; and, accordingly, kept repeating, like any other robber, "your keys, your jewels, your cash, your plate," till at length he terrified the poor monks into compliance, and got a splendid booty; among other things, some magnificent jewels, with which his lady afterwards made herself a necklace.

Not only gold, and silver, and jewels, however, but the sacred vestments, gorgeously-bound books, household utensils, wine, and cattle, and corn were seized: even the altars and the relics of saints were plundered, and the brutality went so far as to tear to pieces the magnificent organ for the sake of the pipes. The Abbot, a feeble, and apparently almost imbecile old man, had escaped, but was taken by some ruffians among the peasants, robbed of everything, and stripped almost naked, so that a peasant boy had been moved by pity to give him a "*kittel*," or smock-frock, to clothe himself with. He was brought in, bewildered and trembling, to where Sir Gotz of Berlichingen and the captains were drinking and making merry, and was sharply questioned concerning the money



that he was supposed to have concealed. He was also, it seems, detected in the act of attempting to hide his silver goblet, which the poor old man had a particular affection for, and pathetically entreated to be allowed to keep; but the Knight replied, "Dear Abbot, you have drunk long enough out of silver; try now how the liquor tastes out of earthenware." The Abbot sighed as he saw carried away all the beautiful things on which, it is to be feared, he had too much set his affections; and Gotz comforted him again, in the same style, with "Don't take it to heart, dear Abbot, it's nothing when you're used to it; I have been ruined three times in my life, and yet, you see, here I am."

Sir Gotz, in his autobiography, asserts that he took the goblet from the Abbot only for the sake of restoring it to him in private; an account which readers can believe if they like. The Abbot again, in his story, declared that Gotz struck him on the breast with his iron hand, which, in the absence of other testimony, we hope we need not believe. The touch of the iron hand may, perhaps, have been rougher than the owner supposed or intended. Our readers may recollect an anecdote of the good old times in France, when it was the custom at a certain place, in the celebration of Easter, for the comfort and edification of pious Christians, to bring every year a Jew into the church to receive a box in the ears. The duty was performed by a knight, who, on one occasion, not pulling off his iron gauntlet gave such a box in the ears, that the brains of the Jew bespattered the marble pavement.

However the case may stand with Sir Gotz of Berlichingen, one thing appears clear, that the morals of the peasants were not likely to improve much under his guidance.

To the more intelligent of the peasant leaders it must have been obvious that such proceedings as these at Amorbach could lead to no good; and accordingly we find that Wendel Hipler was making all haste to call together what he hoped would be a great national congress, by which the great business of the political and religious reform of the empire might be undertaken. As  
as the 9th of May, a committee chosen by the

peasants was sitting in the free imperial city of Heilbronn to deliberate upon the measures to be adopted to this effect, and as the movement had now spread over great part of Germany, envoys were sent off to the different districts, urging the people to send representatives immediately to that city. From various quarters messengers were continually arriving with questions concerning innumerable things, not always easy to be answered. Some related to the conduct of the war. What remained to be done by each division? What resistance they were severally likely to meet with? What help would be required by each? Should the princes and lords, who should now form an alliance with them, be recompensed for their losses out of the estates of the church? When and where was the great reformation to take place, and who was to be summoned to take part in it? Learned men from the universities, citizens, peasants, and of each how many? How many members were the princes and nobles to be allowed to send? How and by whom were the expenses of the representatives to be paid? The committee had, it must be confessed, business enough upon their hands; for besides answering these questions and many more, they had to draw up a project for a new constitution, which it was intended should restore to the bulk of the people the ancient Germanic freedom, abolish the countless petty sovereignties, confine within narrow limits the power of the Church and the aristocracy, but secure all prerogatives necessary for the support of the Imperial throne, and place the Emperor at the head of a great, free, united nation.

That such a project should have been formed is, perhaps, the most remarkable fact connected with the Peasant War, and is of itself a sufficient answer to those who would represent it as a mere riot, an outbreak of brutal, thoughtless, animal fury, and nothing more.\*

The principal authors of this sketch of a constitution are supposed to have been Wendel Hipler and one Frede-

\* The sketch of a constitution drawn up by the committee at Heilbronn in fourteen articles, is given by Dr. Zimmerman in his "*Allgemeine Geschichte des Bauern Krieges*," and at more length by Oechsle and others.

ric Weigand, to whom the celebrated twelve articles also have been mostly attributed, and who seems to have been a man of thought and high capability, but to have taken no part in the outward conduct of the war, though he exerted all the power of his pen to direct, wherever it appeared possible, the wild force that was in motion, to worthy and intelligible objects.

Twenty years before a similar plan for the centralisation and unity of the German Empire had been formed by one of the princes of the Church, the holder of the highest ecclesiastical dignity of Germany.

Berthold, Archbishop of Mainz, had in the latter years of the reign of Frederic III and the beginning of that of Maximilian, planned a constitution for the Germanic empire, that would have had many striking points of similarity with that of England. He would have granted to the cities, which he regarded as the centre of the national strength, a regular and important share in the proceedings of the Diet. This he would have divided into two chambers; the one to consist of the princes and higher nobility; the lower or house of commons of the representatives of the cities and the lower order of nobles.\* He aimed at abolishing the power of the aristocracy over the peasants, and subjecting all equally to the power of the crown; and what was more, his plans extended to the erection of strong and, if possible, impassable barriers to the ambition and covetousness of Rome. Whether the committee at Heilbronn was acquainted with this plan or not, there are no means of ascertaining; but except as a mere literary question it is quite immaterial, since the entertainment of so enlightened a project, especially considering the quarter it proceeded from, would have done them as much honour as its original formation. The one they put forward appears to have been a really great, comprehensive, and rational scheme, embracing many points that are even now looked forward to as of vast national importance, and if compared with most of the projects of law and government, brought forward nearly three hundred years afterwards during the French

\* The plan was frustrated by the premature death of the Archbishop in 1504.

revolution, will show with what injustice the whole peasant party have been regarded as a mere insane rabble.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE FIELD OF FRANKENHAUSEN.

SINCE Mulhausen was a free city, subject to no authority but that of the emperor, Munzer and his disciples experienced little or no interference in their proceedings. He was now established quietly enough in a building which had belonged to a convent of the Knights of St. John, engaged in making what warlike preparations he could, casting bullets and sending for powder from Nurnberg, where all parties, if they only brought ready money, were equally welcome to purchase.

In the sword he thought lay now the only chance of deliverance; only from the ashes of the existing world could arise that new heaven and new earth, to which he still looked forward. He believed, however, that the time was not yet come; and Pfeiffer appears to have become, in a great measure, his evil genius by hurrying him prematurely into the field.

Pfeiffer had had a dream, it seems, in which he had seen himself in a barn surrounded by a vast multitude of mice, on which he made a tremendous onslaught and obtained a glorious victory. These mice he interpreted to signify the princes and nobles; and on the strength of his dream he set out with a band of his followers, plundered castles and convents, and returned to Mulhausen laden with rich booty, and bringing with him also several prisoners. Encouraged by this success similar expeditions were undertaken in various directions, and waggon loads of provisions and household utensils, as well as abundance of church plate and other valuable property, seized.

The peasants revelled in hitherto unknown luxuries;

the fish-ponds were emptied of their delicate contents, and in one place a large brewing vat was filled with fish to boil, "that for once in their lives the poor people might have their fill of fish," which, in its fresh state, was usually reserved for the exclusive use of their masters, and preserved even more strictly than game has been in our days.\*

While these things were going on, several allied princes had been marching large bodies of troops into the country, and with a mere swarm of half-armed, undisciplined, demoralised peasants, Munzer found himself compelled to risk a battle; he who had never so much as seen one, to act as leader against experienced generals and veteran troops. On the 15th of May, Munzer had posted himself on a height near Frankenhausen, still bearing the name of Battle Hill, and had drawn round it a sort of fortification with waggons, and a deep ditch. His force amounted only to about 8000 men, fearfully inferior even in numbers to that brought against him. Of these some wished to fight, but many desired peace almost on any terms, rather than a battle under such disadvantages; and among this party were several nobles, Count Wolfgang, Von Stollberg, and others, who had joined the peasants merely from fear, when their cause had appeared prosperous, and who looked for nothing better than a good opportunity of deserting them. To this party the princes now addressed themselves, and endeavoured to increase the already existing disorders by offering advantageous terms to those peasants who would give up their leaders, especially their false prophet, Thomas Munzer, and pledging themselves to refrain from hostilities for three hours,

\* A certain baron of Praunstein of Franconia showed a zeal on an occasion of this sort, exceeding certainly that of an English squire after a poacher. A peasant boy had unlawfully appropriated some little crabs which he had caught, and the liege lord having taken the culprit, sent to the neighbouring city of Frankfort on the Maine, to borrow an executioner for the purpose of beheading him forthwith. The free city was so discourteous as to decline lending their officer for this purpose, and even to suggest a doubt of the propriety of the proceeding. From some other quarter the desired assistance was procured, however, and the boy actually beheaded for this offence.

that they might have time to reflect. The situation of Munzer became every moment more critical; the enemy was drawing round the hill, and inclosing him on all sides, the divisions in his camp were increasing, and there was evident hesitation about accepting the offer made of purchasing their safety by giving him up. At length a noble and a priest spoke out aloud against him; but Munzer was surrounded by a body guard, and by a still numerous band of his disciples; he had the noble and the priest tried in a summary manner, and immediately beheaded. Better had he not done so, but the crisis was come, it was life for life. Let those who feel that under the strongest temptation they would rather suffer than do a wrong, cast at him the first stone. He next addressed the throng in his usual tone of wild enthusiasm, crossed, however, by lurid gleams of despair, for he saw now how vain is the attempt to make men free, merely by removing outward restraints, while they are still slaves to ignorance and passion. He tried to rouse them, if not to valour at least to rage, by recalling to them the tyranny and cruelty of their rulers, and contrasting the luxury and vicious indulgences of their lives with the ceaseless toil and hardship to which they would condemn the peasants: he reminded them of his divine mission, of the promises of God to help the poor and the needy, of the wonders effected by Gideon, and Jonathan, and David against hosts of enemies; and rising into a strain of the wildest fanaticism, declared at last that by divine help he should be able to catch in his sleeve the bullets that should be shot against them. While he was yet speaking, a beautiful rainbow\* was seen round the sun, though the sky was quite blue, and this of course was interpreted into a direct sign from heaven in his favour, as a rainbow was painted upon his standard. Wild acclamations arose among his followers: many who had been wavering saw in this phenomenon the immediate token of the favour of heaven, the sure presage of victory; those who still doubted dared not utter their doubts. On Munzer's putting the question whether they would now deliver him to

\* This singular rainbow is mentioned in several accounts as having been seen at the same moment in various places.

his enemies, they shouted "No! no! alive or dead we will remain with you;" and called on him to prepare for the battle, but first, for the promised three hours' truce was not yet half expired, they would give utterance to a solemn thanksgiving. The multitude set up a hymn, but it was suddenly interrupted by a heavy fire poured into their ranks. The princes had observed the movement among them, and, according to custom, paid no further regard to their promise when it was found expedient to break it, but moving rapidly forward so as completely to inclose the hill, began to mow down the surprised and panic-struck peasants, many of whom stood gazing up into the sky, expecting that a legion of angels would be sent to their rescue. One small band seems to have made a desperate stand, but was finally overpowered by numbers; the greater part were slaughtered almost without resistance. Some few fell back into the town of Frankenhäusen, rallying from time to time, and driving back their enemies, but were mostly cut down at last in the streets. Even the townspeople were massacred for having shown sympathy with the peasants; the bodies of five thousand slain lay on the field and in the town, the little brook rolled on its waters crimsoned with blood, but the princes were not yet satiated; three hundred prisoners whom they had taken were brought to the marketplace to be beheaded at once, without any inquiry. Among them were several priests, and with truly diabolical malice, when the unfortunate women of Frankenhäusen came rushing in to implore the victors to spare the lives of their husbands, they were told their request should be granted if they would kill the priests themselves, which the miserable half frantic creatures accordingly did.\* Who were now the tigers thirsting for blood?

\* The MS. Chronicles of the town of Erfurt tell the horrible story thus: "The Landgrave (Philip of Hesse) and Duke George (of Saxony) had a preacher and his chaplain brought to the wives of the prisoners, and told them to beat the priests to death with clubs if they would obtain the lives of their husbands; and the women did so, and the heads of the preachers were smashed like a boiled herb, *'wie ein gesottenes Krauthaupt,'* and their brains left sticking

Munzer, totally unable to stem the torrent, at length reached Frankenhauseu, with some horsemen in close pursuit. He found his way into a house that was open, and going up into a loft, concealed himself there in a bed, but was soon discovered by the servant of a knight who had taken up his quarters in the house, as he came spying about after booty. He was carried before the Princes, and had now recovered the momentary terror that appears to have seized upon him when he hid himself, and which is surely not a sufficient ground for an accusation of cowardice, for he must have too surely foreseen the fate that awaited him. On being questioned as to his conduct, he answered that he had done only what was right, for that it was his duty to resist to the utmost those who would have crushed the Gospel, and trampled on Christian liberty; and when the Landgrave of Hesse would have drawn him into a dispute, with a view to preach a Lutheran sermon in favour of passive obedience, Munzer stood disdainfully silent. We turn shuddering from the account of the treatment he experienced; but, as an additional refinement of cruelty, the Princes, not content with what they themselves inflicted, afterwards bound their victim to a cart, and sent him to the fierce Count Ernst of Mansfield, who "went horribly to work with him" (*ist gräulich mit ihm umgegangen*).

From his dungeon he wrote to Muhlhausen, advising his followers there to give up the city and obtain what mercy they could; the misfortunes into which they had fallen, he attributes to the selfishness of which they had been guilty, but the judgments of God are not always to be judged from outward appearances. "He himself had wished, for the good of the people, to abolish many abuses, but ignorance and selfishness have destroyed his work: it has now pleased God that he shall depart from this world, to the clubs; and the Princes looked on and saw it done." It is most painful to draw aside the veil from such horrors, but it is necessary to remember what was really the "life, character, and behaviour" of men of whom several (the Landgrave, Philip of Hesse, the Elector, John of Saxony, and others), were allowed to take a part in a great religious form, lest we should confound the Reformation itself with the evils that stained its course, and be tempted to turn from it with grief and loathing, and love darkness better than light.



and he is well content to do so." Repeatedly, and earnestly he entreats them to have a care of his unfortunate wife, and to leave her the little property she had in her possession.\*

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE SIEGE OF THE CASTLE OF THE FRAUENBERG.

LET us go back a little to look at what had been going on at the same moment at another place. In Alsace, and Thuringia and Saxony, the standard of the peasants had fallen, but a large body was still lying before the castle of the Frauenberg, the citadel of Wurzburg, the garrison of which was beginning to look anxiously for relief. The town was in possession of the peasants, and their council was holding its sittings in the chapter-room, "with a line of guards armed with halberds, extending all the way down the steps to the body of the church." The council consisted of five deputies from each troop, who were changed every fourteen days, and of Gotz von Berlichingen, Florian Geyer, and a few other of the principal leaders. A message arrived from the castle to request a truce while the garrison could communicate with the Prince Bishop, concerning the acceptance of the Twelve Articles; but, after much discussion, the opinion of Florian Geyer prevailed that the peasants should press for an immediate surrender; the garrison, however, amongst whom were many nobles of high rank, might have leave to withdraw, and take with them whatever property they had in the castle, with the exception of guns and munitions of war, and it should then be left to the people of Wurzburg and its neighbourhood to determine whether the castle should

\* In the opinion of Dr. Zimmerman, who has consulted all the original sources of information, Melancthon's account of the riches accumulated by Munzer, as well as of his having in his last moments professed the Catholic faith, is entirely false and calumnious.

be destroyed or not. The garrison declared they had no power to give up the castle, and the negotiations failed for the present ; but there seems to have been no haste on the part of the peasants to proceed to extremities, for two days afterwards we find a dignitary of the Church coming down from the castle under a safe conduct to attempt again to treat with them. The townspeople, however, wished to have the castle destroyed, as they were in hopes of turning Würzburg into a free imperial city, and in this they were supported by Florian Geyer, true to his principle, that no castles, as they had afforded the means of so much tyranny, should subsist any longer. Gotz von Berlichingen, who longed to be again at his old enemies, the Bishop of Bamberg and the Nurnbergers, urged the acceptance of the offers made by the garrison ; but as the Count of Wertheim had now seen good to join the " Evangelical Brotherhood," and had brought with him not only a considerable number of his vassals, but also, what was much wanted, some good guns, the peasants had great hopes of being able to take the castle, and would offer no better terms than they had already done, which were, indeed, one would think, as favourable as could well be expected. The negotiation was therefore again broken off, and the envoys returned without their errand to the castle, not sorry perhaps to find themselves safe again within its walls, for the excitement among the peasants during the discussion had been very great. Almost immediately after, a messenger arrived from the Elector Palatine, offering his mediation ; but this was decidedly rejected, and once more the castle was summoned by the city and the Evangelical Brotherhood. The same or nearly the same answer was returned, and as a last resort Count George of Wertheim rode up thither with two or three companions, and, dismounting, proceeded alone to the wicket, and called out that he wished to speak to some of the nobles within. The margrave, Frederick of Brandenburg, and Count Wolf von Castell advanced to the wicket accordingly, and inquired how the Count of Wertheim came among the peasants, and his declaration that he had joined them willingly seems to have occasioned some mirth. The result of the conference was an attempt on the part of the garrison to

separately with the Oden forest troop, and an offer of a large sum of money to them if they would procure the withdrawal of the peasant force. The news of this proposal created a great commotion both in the camp and in the city; for the peasants perceived that it was an attempt to weaken them by occasioning jealousy and divisions. The townsmen of Wurzburg also, fearing that if the peasants withdrew, they would themselves be given up to the vengeance of the Bishop, ran together tumultuously, with pickaxes, mattocks, and other mining implements, and uttered threats of vengeance against the peasant leaders if they attempted to desert them. In the peasants' council, too, the scene became very violent. Sir Gotz declared vehemently his objection to the plan of destroying castles, and said that if they did not mean to leave one standing, he, for his part, would rather serve among the heathen Turks. In his narrative of the transaction he says, that the peasants threatened him with the fate of the Count of Helfenstein. Some members of the council were accused of being in league with the Bishop, and the uproar every moment became louder. In this extremity, Florian Geyer, perceiving that all would be lost if a sudden end were not put to these riots and intrigues, had three gallows erected in the shortest possible time, in three different parts of the town, and signified in terms not to be mistaken, his determination to hang as speedily as might be all who should persist in raising a mutiny and creating a strife among the Christian Brotherhood. The provost also with his assistants was ordered to be in readiness, and three companies of men who could be depended on were marched into the town, to do duty in place of the civic guard, which had failed to keep order. At the same time he ordered that every morning at four o'clock, mass should be said in German in the cathedral, and a sermon preached to the men by a favourite preacher, formerly Brother Ambrosius of the order of St. Augustin; and thus by a judicious mixture of terror and persuasion, he restored something like tranquillity to both city and camp.

Active preparations were now made for the assault upon the castle. Opposite to it, on the St. Nicholas hill,

works had been erected ; and the guns of the Wertheimers drawn up and protected by gabions ; and rafts got ready under the stone bridge which crosses the Maine, as by this means the river could be passed without injury from the castle, which commanded the bridge itself. On Sunday, before break of day, the drums and fifes of the Franconians were heard as they moved up the hill to occupy the works, and at four o'clock they opened a fire from their great guns. It was found, however, that the distance was somewhat too great, and the guns did little injury ; whilst the fire was returned from the castle, not to the hill, but into the town. Another fire was opened from the Augustine convent, which did much more mischief ; and on both sides this went on till a late hour in the night. On the Monday morning, it is said, a beautiful rainbow was seen round the sun, while the sky was perfectly clear ; the same rainbow which, we may recollect, was seen at Frankenhausen ; and the sign was variously interpreted by the besieged, some regarding it as a token of victory, others as a warning of death ; for, at the moment when it was first observed, a ball struck through a window, and killed one of the officers, who had just lain down to rest on a bed. The peasants, however, universally rejoiced in it as unequivocally favourable to them, since in their various standards united all its colours were found ; and they now went on with renewed confidence. Between nine and ten at night, when it was quite dark, a strong party, mostly of Florian Geyer's men, though, unfortunately, Florian himself was absent, having been despatched on a special mission to bring reinforcements from Rothenburg, assembled in a garden on the east side of the hill on which the castle stood, with scaling ladders and all implements necessary for a storm, and, when all was ready, they rushed up the hill with great shouts, and made an assault upon one of the outworks, which they carried, and let themselves and their tools down into the deep dry ditch, and attempted to plant their ladders ; but so heavy a fire was poured down upon them from the castle, that they were driven back ; and when again they rushed on, they were met by torrents of flaming pitch and sulphur,

red-hot balls, and stones, petards, and incessant discharges of artillery. From all the walls and towers, from every window and aperture, the castle seemed to vomit fire, and far around, in the darkness of the night it shone; a beautiful, but terrible spectacle, at which the citizens thronging the streets of Wurzburg stood gazing in terror, deafened by the thunders of the great guns and the cries and shouts of those who were carrying on the work of death. But, unfortunately, the storm had been attempted prematurely, before a sufficient breach had been made; and, though hundreds of the peasants lay slain and mangled round the walls, the castle still stood secure, and apparently, impregnable. The whole night long the battle rages fiercely; the clocks strike two hours after midnight, and, while those in the castle are expecting the third assault, there is a fearful pause. A captain of Lanzknechts leans for a moment from a window to see what the besiegers are doing, and is seen, by the light behind him, by a peasant lying half shattered and dying in a ditch. With the last strength of his arm he raises himself slowly, takes deliberate aim at the captain, and shoots him dead. All night those in the castle have been busy casting bullets; and, as yet, though they have many wounded, they have but three dead. Of the peasants, four hundred lie slain in the ditches and fortifications, though those who fell beyond have been carried off. In the afternoon of the following day, the besiegers have made no further progress; they make a sign for a parley, and ask for a short truce while they may carry away and bury their wounded and dead. The garrison, not sorry for a respite, were willing enough to grant the truce, but stipulated that no one should approach the ditches. This the peasants refused to agree to, and retired to consider what was to be done; while the wounded lay languishing in every variety of torment. "Not one was helped," says the narrative,\* "not one taken out of the ditches, but they crawled about, groaning and sobbing, till they died." The loss of the peasants at the second storm had been terrible, the advantage gained very trifling; and, though their hopes were now a little revived by the return of Florian

\* That of Thomas Zweifel.

Geyer, and some cannon and ammunition from Rothenburg, with them came also the news of many disasters, and of the march of George Truchsess, and the army of the allied princes through Würtemberg.

Götz von Berlichingen declared in the council, that his brothers on the Neckar were hard pressed, and he must go to their assistance ; that it was but wasting time to lie before this castle, as the army of the League and their allies were advancing upon them ; and that, for his part, it was his intention to leave Würzburg, and give his help where it would be of some use. It was evidently necessary to come quickly to some decision. Again, an offer was made to the besieged of the Twelve Articles : but, as the answer did not arrive, a list was opened at the inn of the "Green Tree," for the names of all who would volunteer to attempt the storm a third time ; and an offer was made to those who would subscribe it of all the gold, silver, jewels, and household utensils that the castle contained, besides a considerable bounty in money.

Notwithstanding these offers the lists were filled but slowly, and the citizens now procured the help of some forty miners, and set about undermining the rock on which the castle stood : but it proved a tedious business ; and the slow progress of the siege gave time for all personal jealousies, suspicions, and distrusters to awaken, and disputes and dissensions to ripen into quarrel. The Count of Werthheim, not concerning himself at all about the oath he had taken to the peasants, took an opportunity of withdrawing with his vassals ; and was perhaps no great loss, for it had been observed that, on the night of the storm, both he and Gotz von Berlichingen had kept with their men in the close neighbourhood of the castle, rather, as it was thought, with the purpose of protecting those within in case it should be taken, than of taking any part in the attack. It was even suspected that they had been watching for an opportunity to throw themselves into it.

Things were altogether in a distracted state when, after hard riding over various parts of the country, Wendel Hipler arrived at Würzburg, and his spirit hovering over the conflicting elements, at length reduced them to some-

thing like order. He had wished to form a fortified camp at Krautheim on the Jaxt ; which should cover the Tauber and the Middle Maine, and keep in check the Counts of Hohenlohe, who had broken their promise of sending a troop of horse, and were evidently meditating a desertion.

But, as he found it impossible to obtain the concurrence of the council to this proposal, he contented himself with getting Götz von Berlichingen and George Mezler to march with 7000 men towards Wirtemberg, leaving 4000 still lying before the castle.

And there they continued to lie, receiving sometimes false information, and sometimes no information at all, of the disastrous course events were taking ; but soon certain travellers coming from Schweinfurt told of having seen the heavens like a sea of fire; and having heard that the light was from burning villages, kindled by several allied Princes—the Landgrave of Hesse, the Elector Palatine, Duke George of Saxony, and others, who were advancing in great force. The fire from the castle, in the mean time, was doing the peasants much mischief, although from intercepted letters they knew that the garrison was beginning to suffer from scarcity of provisions ; their water was nearly all gone, and they had to use wine instead for their cooking ; but even the wine, it was thought, could not last long.

The besiegers were suffering from an opposite cause ; namely, the abundance of good things to which they were little accustomed. Disorders and quarrels daily arose among them while they were spending their time in an idle way, waiting for some cannon, which the smiths of Wurzburg were busy casting ; and which could not fail, it was thought, to bring down enough of the walls to make a storm possible. While they were waiting for the cannon there were rumours one night that a ladder had been hastily let down from the battlements of the castle and three figures had ascended, and after a short space hastily descended again. The peasants fired in that direction, but in the faint light apparently without effect ; and shortly after the warder from the tower began to blow scornful airs at them, and some said a considerable party of horsemen dashed hastily into the wood and disappeared.

The occurrence created uneasiness ; but many comforted themselves with the assurance that, instead of being troopers of the Swabian League, as had been feared, they were but phantom horsemen, conjured up by the arts of a certain Barefoot Friar famed for his knowledge of the black art, who was shut up in the castle.

A few days, however, decided this question. A loud and joyful flourish of trumpets from the Frauenberg announced at length the approach of succours ; and soon there was no longer a doubt that the army of the allied Princes was close at hand. The peasants had to fall back across the Maine bridge into Wurzburg. Here they resolved to defend themselves : had they wished to escape, they might easily have done so ; for the right bank of the Maine continued unoccupied by their enemies for two days, and by that way they might have found their way to the great Spessart forest, where no horsemen could follow them. They do not seem to have had any thoughts of flying ; but they knew not that, besides the foe without, they had also traitors within. The Burgomaster and the old senate of Wurzburg were planning to purchase their own safety, or at least a mitigation of punishment, by giving them up. That the peasants might have no suspicion of the design, they made a point of opening a negotiation with the Princes to surrender the town on conditions very favourable to the peasants ; but the messengers sent out of the town for this purpose, were secretly charged with another office ; namely, to offer to give them up unconditionally to their enemies, as the price of pardon for some of the principal citizens. The Princes were in pursuance of this agreement admitted into the town ; and once in, they do not seem to have kept the agreement very strictly, for seventy of the citizens were immediately thrown into prison and many beheaded. Of the peasants who were taken prisoners, two hundred, considered as ring-leaders, were condemned to death, but some of these were afterwards released, either from a movement of pity or of prudence ; for as one of the nobles observed,—“ If they killed all their peasants, how were the nobles to live ? ”



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE LAST SCENE OF THE TRAGEDY.

THE treacherous conduct of the citizens of Wurzburg was by no means singular ; for little cordial sympathy had ever existed between the population of town and country, and the cities had seldom done more than take advantage of the insurrection of the peasantry to gain particular ends of their own, and especially to strengthen their attack on the church : but now that the tide was turning against the insurgents, they, as well as the nobles who had joined the "Evangelical Brotherhood," were hastening to desert them.

Near the town of Böblingen in Wirtemberg, which had joined the peasants, a body of them were now lying ; and opposite to them was George Truchsess, with a considerable force. The peasants were about fifteen thousand, and had twenty or thirty field-pieces, but no cavalry ; and a great number of them had no other arms than a firelock, and some only a scythe or a bill-hook. The troops of the League were equal, or little inferior in number ; but they were all well armed, and they had abundance of cavalry and artillery, and for this reason the peasant leaders were not indisposed to listen to offers of accommodation which George Truchsess now seemed inclined to make ; but it appeared afterwards that it was with no other view than that of waiting for a favourable opportunity to attack them. The leaders of the peasants had appointed a meeting to take place at seven o'clock on the following morning, in a neighbouring convent, to consider of the message sent to them, and accordingly the Black Forest troop left their camp at Böblingen, and drew out into the open fields between that and the little town of Sindelfingen, the place of rendezvous. But before they were all assembled, far less had had time to begin the discussion, the sound of cannon was heard, the balls came flying among them, and a body of horse appeared advancing upon them from behind a wood. \*

They now made what haste they could to get into order of battle ; and a knight, probably one of those who had been induced to join them by attachment to evangelical principles, Ritter Bernhard Schenk, made as skilful a disposition of their forces as circumstances permitted. Their rear leant on the little town of Sindelfingen and the Oxenwood, and kept open the road to Stuttgart ; the chief division occupied the field between Sindelfingen and Böblingen, and the van was supported by that town and its castle, the whole line being covered by several small lakes and a bog. .

But the army of the peasants had greater difficulties to contend with than such as could be met by any amount of military skill. The high hope and enthusiasm by which they had at first been animated had died away or burnt itself out amidst the scenes of violence through which they had passed ; and they now fought, rather because nothing was to be expected from yielding to enemies so implacable, than from any hopes of ultimate victory ; they were divided by many various interests and feelings ; there were in their host paid agents of their enemies, who made it their chief business to sow dissensions among them ; and in the perplexity and confusion of ignorance, they could not but be swayed to and fro by the variable moods of passion.

Without confidence in themselves, or reliance on each other, aimless, and nearly hopeless, they had no choice left, but whether they would or not, to risk a battle, in which, though defeat might be fatal, victory would do them little service.

After some previous skirmishing the actual battle began about ten o'clock, and had continued for about three hours, with a more favourable result for the peasants than could have been expected, when the treachery of the governor of Böblingen came to the help of their adversaries, and turned the fortune of the day against them. At a very early hour in the morning he had gone over secretly to the camp of George Truchsess, and offered to open the gates to him, on the promise that the town should be spared ; and it was upon this understanding that the latter had arranged his whole plan of

the battle. His troops had afterwards been twice beaten back by the peasants, in the attempt to approach the gate; but having at length discovered that there was one gate guarded only by the townspeople, he led on in person two hundred arquebusiers, and succeeded in reaching it. The townspeople hesitated; but when Truchsess called out to those upon the walls, that if the gate were not immediately opened, he would set fire to the town and burn them all, along with their wives and children; the gate was opened, for they knew him too well to suppose he would have any scruples about putting his threat in execution. The troops immediately occupied the castle, and the peasants saw too late that they had been betrayed. A murderous fire was now poured into their ranks from a quarter whence it was totally unexpected; and at the same moment they were attacked in front and on both flanks, and their artillery taken and turned against them. The van gave way, and was driven back upon the main body, which also, after a brave resistance on the part of some companies, was thrown into confusion, and finally routed by a body of cavalry, which had taken the name of "The Peasants' Death." The flight soon became general in the direction of the forest of Bublengen, whither "The Peasants' Death" could not follow. The utmost that their leaders could do was to save the rear, which effected a tolerably successful retreat to Stuttgart, where they dispersed. The battle was over by two o'clock in the afternoon; but the whole remainder of the day till a late hour, was occupied by the troops of Truchsess in shooting and cutting down without mercy all whom they found or could overtake. Many were shot from the trees into which they had climbed to conceal themselves; and fell, it was said, "like storks out of their nests." Truchsess posted himself at the entrance of the wood, and stabbed many as they sought a shelter within it. He encamped on the field; but having afterwards learnt that some fugitives, and among them one who had taken part in the slaughter of the nobles of Weinsperg, had found a refuge in the town of Sindelfingen, he rode up to the gate with a few of his troopers; and having summoned the burghers, called out,—“You have within

your walls a villain who was at the murder of my cousins at Weinsperg. If you do not give him up within half an hour, I will burn your town, with your wives and children." The man was found concealed in a dovecot, and brought to Truchsess, who recognised in him the piper, Melchior Nunnenmacher, and wreaked upon him a vengeance which one would think should leave little to be said of the ferocity of the peasants. He ordered him to be fastened with an iron chain to an apple-tree, in such a manner that he could run round it to a distance of about two feet. He then commanded wood to be brought; and round the tree, about a fathom and a half from it, he had a great circular pile built up; he himself, the noble George Truchsess von Waldburg, the Count Ulrich von Helfenstein, Count Frederick von Furstenberg, the Baron von Hutten, and others of his chivalry, working at it with their own hands. The pile was then kindled; it was night; the bright stars looked down upon the wide battle-field, strewn over with the dead—with broken waggons and tents, guns and weapons of every kind, amongst which, also, lay many of the peasants wounded and mangled, but still living, whose groans and convulsive sobs were heard at intervals, amidst the roar of drunken revelry from the camp of the victors, and the *shouts of laughter* from the nobles, exulting like demons over the sufferings of their victim, as he sprung shrieking from one point to another of the fiery circle, within which he was slowly roasting to death (*feinlangsam gebraten*),\* says the narrative of one who looked on. The other prisoners stood by, images of horror, white and cold as stone.

\* The most minute description of this scene of horror has been left by several eye-witnesses. One of them, Mart. Crusius, says, "Georgius Truchsessius illorum unum ad palam catenis laxè alligat; ligna ipsemet et nobiles alii comportant. Successù igne ille miserabiliter vi cruciatus circumcurrere; clamare alias, Deus, me tolle; alias, Diabole, me tolle; interdum cadere, rursum subsaltare; talis et pedibus igne consumptis, nudis ossibus circumsaltare; donec tandem mortuus et fossus est."

This account is confirmed by others, and has not, we believe, ever been contradicted. Indeed it agrees so well with the character of George Truchsess, that we are not aware that it has ever been doubted.

For many days afterwards Wirtemberg was scattered over in all directions with unarmed peasants flying, with uncovered heads and barefoot, towards the frontier. Some escaped, but all who were taken were slaughtered without mercy.

A fugitive from the fatal field of Böblingen had brought to Heilbronn, on the following day, the news of these disastrous occurrences, with even exaggerated accounts of the strength of the force brought against the peasants, and Wendel Hipler, who, with a few others, was still working at the plan for the great reform, found himself compelled to abandon all future considerations, to provide, if possible, the means of stemming the current that was now setting so strongly against them. He dispatched messengers to all quarters where he could hope for assistance, and appointed Weinsperg as a place of general rendezvous; at the same time he exerted himself to the utmost to collect the scattered remnants of the Wirtemberg division of the peasant army, and inspire them with courage for another effort.

The senate of Heilbronn in the mean time got together in a great hurry to concert measures to avert the consequences of their late coalition with the peasants. Among other devices they bethought themselves as endeavouring to get into favour with the widowed Countess of Helfenstein, and set on foot a search through all the goldsmiths' shops for jewels of great price, crosses, rings, &c., which had belonged to her, and been sold in their city after the plunder of the castle of Weinsperg. In this, however, it appeared, some one had been beforehand with them, as there were none to be found; it was said they had been bought up for the countess by a faithful attendant.

An embassy was now immediately sent off to the Swabian League, and another to George Truchsess, amongst whom was a citizen who, in these latter days, had been diligently helping Wendel Hipler with his reform project. George Truchsess was absent; but they found his principal officers assembled at supper at Stuttgart, and made known their errand, declaring that their city was in imminent danger of being taken a second

time by a peasant force, under the command of Götz von Berlichingen, who was advancing upon them from Wurzburg and begged for some of the troops of the League to assist them in the defence. The nobles assured them with an air of somewhat ironical friendliness, that they need not suffer their sleep to be disturbed by any such fear, for that George Truchsess would certainly be with them in the course of a day or two.

In the night, however, the envoys were awakened by another messenger from Heilbronn, who brought a letter, stating that twelve hundred peasants were already assembled at Weinsperg, and their numbers rapidly increasing, at the same time there was no longer any doubt that those from Wurzburg under Götz von Berlichingen were really advancing, with threats of taking signal revenge on the senate for deserting them. An hour's delay might be fatal, they therefore besought the officers in command to send them at least two companies of lanzknechts. As it was thought, however, that these two companies would stand a very good chance of being cut off on their way to Heilbronn, the request was refused; and the disconsolate ambassadors had to write back no better comfort than an injunction to their fellow-townsmen to keep a good watch, and above all things to lay in as good a stock of provisions as possible against the visit of their League friends—an injunction which, in the desolate state of the country, we may suppose it was not very easy to obey.

It is during these sad days, when there was nothing to be done for the people but to die for them, that we again meet the name of Florian Geyer.

Leaving a battle-field where all had been lost but life and honour, the peasants, such of them as are left alive, flying in all directions, he and the remnant of his gallant troop withdrew in close order towards the town and castle of Ingolstadt. On their way they had to turn several times and drive back their pursuers; and at length four hundred of them gained the castle, and about half that number threw themselves into the church. From the tower, from the roof, bullets and stones were rained down upon their enemies; who, however, by

throwing in lighted brands, at last succeeded in setting fire to it ; but, from the very midst of the flames that were consuming them, came the shots of the heroic remnant, as long as one was left alive.

The castle where Florian Geyer and the rest of his brave followers were at bay was almost a ruin, for it had been nearly destroyed in a feud that took place fifty years before ; and around it was now gathered a considerable body of the army of the League, under the elector palatine. The quantity of artillery directed against it had just brought down a great mass of the wall, though it was twenty-four feet thick, and the assailants plunged at once into the ditch, full as it was of slimy mud ; nobles, knights, and lanzknechts, struggling through it pell mell towards the breach ; but desperate men stood there to receive them, who had now no hope but to sell their lives as dearly as possible ; and a heavy rain of bullets and huge stones drove them back again, with a loss of a hundred men of various ranks. As long as the powder and stones hold out, it seems the assailants will have no easy task ; but again they rush on to the storm, and rejoice as they perceive that the shots fall less thickly ; if the powder of those within is getting scarce, they cannot hold out long. This time, indeed, the besiegers make good the entrance ; for their cannon has enlarged the breach still more, and Florian Geyer's men being too few to defend it, have retired to the court-yard of the castle, and there is now only one low wall between them, with one window and a narrow gate. But from this they are again beaten back, though many of the lanzknechts continue to cling like cats to the wall.

Heavy artillery is now brought up to the edge of the moat opposite the breach, so as to play upon the inner wall ; and of the little band within many have been killed, and the rest are becoming exhausted with their tremendous exertions.

A third assault is made, and this time it is successful ; one, two, three, of the banners of the League are floating over the walls, and a deadly struggle is taking place upon them, in which swords and lances and halberds clash mingling confusedly together, and where these fail, mere

strong arms nerved by despair are grappling in mortal strife. Few of the Black Troop now remain, for their bodies lie thick among the ruins; some of these now retreat to the vaults of the castle, whither their enemies hasten to drag barrels of gunpowder and bundles of straw. Florian Geyer with a handful of his men breaks through, however, favoured by the darkness, for it is now night, and gains a neighbouring wood; but the country outside the castle is all illuminated by the light of burning villages; his retreat is discovered; and he is finally killed by his own brother-in-law, William of Grumbach; fortunate to die thus the death of a soldier, and escape a more frightful and ignominious one.

The name of Florian Geyer should not be forgotten amongst those destined to sow in sorrow the seed that may one day be reaped in joy.

As I am not attempting to write a history of the Peasant War, but only to show something of its general course and character, I need not tire my readers with any more of the innumerable small details in which it consists. Every town, every village, every hamlet, has its separate history, in which though the incidents are slightly varied according to time and place, the character and conduct of each party remain the same. The country towards the close of the insurrection, ravaged and destroyed by both parties, was covered with smoking ruins and heaps of unburied dead; the few castles left standing were deserted, their owners having sought refuge within the cities.

While George Truchsess and the allied armies were deluging the country with peasants' blood, noble lords and reverend ecclesiastics, safe within the strong walls of Rotweil and other places, were passing their time in banqueting, drinking, and pleasant boyish frolics, pelting each other with whatever came to hand, pouring pails of dirty water over rich and gay garments, or powdering each other with sacks of meal till robes and doublets were reduced to such a condition, that even prelates were fain to "go home without a lantern," to avoid scandal.

The Elector Palatine had, it seems, felt some misgivings concerning the treatment the peasants had received and



the measures taken to suppress the insurrection, and wrote on the subject to Melancthon. The answer ran that, "such a riotous and unruly people as the Germans ought to have even less freedom than they had ; that what is done by their rulers is good, inasmuch as they do it ; that if they take possession of common lands and forests, no one has any right to oppose them ; if they see fit to take the tithes, the Germans must submit as the Jews had to do when the Romans seized on the treasures of their Temple. The Germans are a *froward bloody-minded* race, who ought to be treated with more severity. God has named the temporal government a sword, and a sword ought to cut," &c. The Elector Palatine found himself "comforted marvellous much" by these arguments, and drew the sword accordingly.\*

The course of the combined armies was marked by burnings, beheadings, hangings, and slaughter in all forms. In one place we hear there was a scarcity of rope, from the great consumption made of it for these purposes : the executions of the peasants went on in the presence of wives and children. "Oh murder !" screamed a child, on one occasion, "they have cut off my father's head." On another, a peasant boy pressing curiously through the ranks of the soldiers to look on, was caught by one of the hangman's assistants, pushed into the throng, and beheaded with the rest. Sometimes the princes and nobles made themselves merry over the business. In a place where a village had been destroyed, some six or seven fugitives were pursued to their hiding-place among the bushes that grew on the side of the castle moat ; and some knights who had followed them, called out that he among them should be pardoned who would stab the rest. A miserable wretch tried to save himself on this condition, and actually killed several of his brethren, and at last rolled into the water locked in deadly embrace with another. The skeletons were afterwards found still linked together at the bottom when the water was some time after drained off. George Truchsess moved about everywhere with a miscreant whom he called his "dear

\* "A letter of Philip Melancthon, against the articles of the peasants," dated 1525.

Berthold" who took delight in the hideous office of the executioner, and exercised it as an amateur.

The town of Weinsperg was burnt to the ground, and an order given that the place should for ever after remain desolate, although the citizens had not only been entirely innocent of the death of the nobles, but had even shed their blood in their defence. On his way thither, George Truchsess took among the prisoners one who had really been an actor in that tragic scene, and perpetrated on him the same frightful vengeance as on the piper, roasting him slowly to the music of drums and fifes, while knights and nobles looked on, and lifted children in their arms that they might see and enjoy the spectacle. Was the temper of the tiger, the "brutal fury," only on the side of the "persons of the lowest rank?"

One of the great faults of the peasants was that ever recurring complaint in popular insurrections that

" While their tyrants join'd in hate  
They never join'd in love."

The nobles very soon saw the necessity of combination, and to all their other advantages added that great one of decision and clear insight into what they had to do. The peasants were certain of nothing but their misery, and what moral strength they had in the beginning, in the just and honourable motives from which they had taken up arms, was soon weakened by religious dissensions. By degrees there is no doubt also that these better motives became in many instances entirely supplanted by the desire of revenge and plunder; for pillage and slaughter, the burning of castles and convents, though perhaps, necessary in self-defence, for hope in the mercy of their rulers they could have none, and though certainly conformable to the usages of war, was not a course of moral education, nor likely to teach rude and ignorant men the moderation of spirit, self-control, wisdom, and forbearance, which alone could have enabled them to unite the scattered elements of their strength unto one whole, and direct them to a worthy object.

They fought mostly in small bodies, under separate

and often incapable or even cowardly leaders, whilst their opponents had experienced generals and veteran troops. The peasants had among them no men of commanding genius who might have guided them through the darkness and confusion of the wild warring elements in which they had to struggle; not even a man of military talents, who might have possessed energy to reduce their chaotic forces into organic order.

But of all the causes of the sorrowful issue of their struggle, the most powerful was that the Lutheran reformers, who might have afforded them the light and guidance they so much needed, not only held themselves aloof, but often, as in the case of Luther himself, ranked among their bitterest foes.\*

Had Luther thrown the weight of his influence on the side of the people, instead of altogether into the opposite scale—had he even shown towards them any of the sympathy which, as grievously suffering as well as erring men, they might have surely claimed from him, their fate and the fate of Germany would probably have been very different. But he turned coldly and harshly even from their first appeal, when, as yet, they were innocent of outrage and crime, unless that of resisting the cruellest tyranny must count for one; and when the deeds committed at Weinsperg afforded him a fair pretext, he burst forth against them with a violence and fury that seemed to have been only waiting for a plausible pretence. Without taking for a moment into consideration that the crime was the act of a very small number, that the nobles who had perished had provoked their fate by the murder of hundreds of defenceless peasants whom they had found on the high roads, that they had poured out the blood of their brethren like water on the Danube, that in their dealings with the peasants they had invariably set at defiance all truth and justice, and all the laws, even of war, he broke into the fiercest vituperation of the

\* "I thank God," said Luther one evening to a friend, "that he has deprived the boors of so great a gift and consolation that they will not listen to music;" a saying surely very significant of his state of feeling with regard to them.—*Table Talk*.

whole body ; wished that "the accursed boors might be struck to the ground ; that all who met them might knock them on the head or shoot them like mad dogs secretly or openly,"\* since he feared the damage they would do to his great work. As for Thomas Munzer "might Satan rend him in pieces."

"Those who spare the rebels," he says, "make themselves like unto men ; they have mercy on those on whom God will not have mercy. . . . The peasants will learn to thank God if they must give one cow that they may be allowed to keep the other ; the princes will learn what the rabble is, and that it can only be governed by force." In a paper against the "murderous and robber peasants" he exhorts the princes and nobles to have no mercy upon them, but with a good conscience to strike home as long as they can move an arm. Their advantage is, that as the peasants have a bad conscience and an unjust cause, as many of them as shall be killed will be lost at once body and soul, and go straight to the devil. The rulers, however, have a good conscience and a just cause ; and whoever shall fall on their side will be a martyr to God.

Long was it before the blood-bedewed fields of Germany were again waving with ripening grain, before towns and villages arose from their ashes, or the blackened ruins of castles became surrounded with smiling gardens which they now serve to adorn with their picturesque decay ; the population was diminished by the loss of 100,000 men in the prime of life, and tens of thousands of orphans were wandering about without a home to shelter them. It is a melancholy depressing spectacle : strong, indeed, should be our faith in the ultimate triumph of good ; high our religious hope that this world is but as the stormy passage to a better, if we could look undismayed at the scenes that history sets before us.

The accounts that have come down to us of the conduct pursued towards the people after their defeat, and of the increased oppression to which they were subjected, have been given wholly by the enemies of their insurrection ; the crushed peasantry is from thenceforward silent as the dying wolf, and only from time to time is heard a voice

\* "Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die Zwölf Artikelne?"

giving utterance, under the torture, to confessions and narratives more or less to be relied on.

The evils that followed in the train of the Peasant War, or rather in that of the causes that had given birth to it, were, of course, not confined to the peasants themselves ; for the quality of oppression is "twice cursed," it curses him who inflicts no less than him who suffers. The progress of the reform of the Church was materially hindered by it ; for the Catholics universally regarded it, or affected to regard it, as wholly the offspring of Luther's teaching. The Pope Clement VII., in congratulating one of the Princes on his victory over his rebellious peasants, speaks of it as a triumph over the doctrines of the Reformation. There may be traced also, from this time, among the Lutherans a certain discordant tone, indicative of the false position in which they had placed themselves. The spring which gushed forth at first so clear and bright, had already become troubled ; instead of heartfelt zeal for religion itself, we find severity in maintaining articles of doctrine, and hostility towards all who departed from them ; disputes concerning the latter among reformers of various shades, becoming fiercer even than those with their common opponents the papists. Turning coldly from the erring and suffering people, and suspiciously on the watch lest the purity of Protestant principles should be endangered by enthusiasts and fanatics, the Lutheran church in Germany was fast losing sight of the great leading principle of Christianity, that of love ; and becoming petrified into a system of rigid dogmas. The Reformation soon lost altogether its character of a popular movement, and the influence even of the spiritual aristocracy of the reformers fast gave way before the power of the princes, who had taken the place of the bishops in the direction of ecclesiastical affairs. At the other extremity of the line the enthusiasts were rushing on more fast and furious, as they found themselves cast off by those who should have guided and restrained them, till they plunged headlong into the frantic excesses of Anabaptism. The success of the Reformation, as a political event, was indeed secure ; but its religious value, at least, as far as Germany was concerned, was greatly lessened.

The high hopes which it had awakened were, in a great measure, disappointed ; the great movement, which might have created a German nation, had ended, sadly enough, in the establishment of the authority of a thousand petty despots : the spirit of the people was broken ; the man who had been borne as on eagles' wings by their love and veneration, had deserted them ; and the light which the nations had hailed as the day-spring from on high, had become shrouded in mists and sullen gloom. Even during the lifetime of Luther and Melancthon, we hear bitter complaints from them of the decay of morals and religion amongst all classes : in the next age the new Church fell under the rule of a little knot of self-sufficient court preachers, Lutheran popes, who ruled their flocks with rods of iron, and darkened and confused all religious feeling with their perpetual wrangling on what they called points of doctrine. These preachers, also, so imperious towards the people, were humble and passive enough to their masters, the princes, who had, in most cases, appropriated to themselves the power and the revenues formerly belonging to the Church, so that the people gained nothing by the change. Of the character of many of these sovereigns who had thus gained supreme spiritual as well as temporal authority, though it was at that time kept hushed up as much as possible, the world has since gained a pretty clear idea ; and, from the period subsequent to the "Religious Peace of Augsburg," German writers date the springing up of the many-headed hydra of bureaucracy, which has been ever since the curse of their country, and tended more, perhaps, to deteriorate the national character than all the oppressions and grindings of the feudal lords of old.

The Peasant War was a failure, and it has reaped the fruits of failure in this world—contempt always, often execration. But shall we give our sympathy only to success ? Not merely he who plants the colours on the fortress, but he who has perished in the forlorn hope, and lies there low in the ditch, and over whom the conqueror has passed to victory, shall claim our praises and our tears. History shows us many of what, if we regard the moment only, we must call failures which are full of a

deeper interest, pregnant with nobler consequences, than her recorded triumphs. Nature herself, indeed, would appear to have her failures in the myriads of innocent lives brough forth only to perish. But it is written that we shall await the end : perhaps many apparent failures are only beginnings, having reference to some higher order, where not merely the action and its outward consequences, but the motive, lying hid in the depths of the soul, in which it originated, shall be the grand point to be considered.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF A GERMAN KNIGHT OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

To turn from the sad and solemn scenes of the Peasant War to those which Germany presents some fifty years afterwards, is to turn from the tragedy to the farce. The storm of fierce passion and terrible suffering has swept away ; the gaping wounds are closed ; the demon of war has been for a time expelled ; but all enthusiasm, all high aspiration, is extinguished : life has assumed a meaner and more prosaic aspect, and society seems kept in motion merely by the activity of the lower instincts. It is an epoch of money-getting and money-spending, of pawnbroking and swindling. "Germany at this period," it has been said, "looked as if a turbulent army had just marched off her soil, and left the deserted camp as a market-place for pedlars and sutlers to wrangle in."

By this time, indeed, some ameliorations have taken place in the condition of the people ; the rising power of the House of Austria has checked the tyranny of the nobles, and thereby diminished the grievances of the peasantry ; fist law and robber knights are now among the things of the past, and the art of printing has begun to bear fruit in a general advance of intelligence ; but, on the whole, considering the state of morals and manners,

there does not seem to be much ground for congratulation.

An admirable picture of the private life of the Germans, in the latter half of the sixteenth century, has been preserved in a curious historical relic discovered about thirty years ago in the castle of Furstenstein in Silesia; a MS. diary of a noble of that time, a Sir Hans von Schweinichen of Mertschulz, containing a record of his own life and that of his master, the Duke Henry of Liegnitz, as amusing and worthless a specimen of what we now call the "gentleman in difficulties," and as ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> adroit a professor of the art of living at other people's expense as even the present enlightened age could produce. It is truly a "Byeway of History" which is opened to us in this autobiography, for scarcely a word is said concerning the important events that were then passing on the great highways of European life; but we have no quarrel with the writer on this ground, for what he does give us in the minute details of every-day business, of the pleasures and troubles of the passing hour, is much more difficult to obtain than a narrative of political transactions, and this is often precisely what enables us most vividly to realize the aspect of a bygone time.

Sir Hans von Schweinichen begins his autobiography, not at the beginning, but considerably before it,—going back several generations to prove his claims to the desirable number of quarterings, that his children, and their children after them, may know that he is come of an ancient and noble race; and, while he thus vindicates his right to a place in this world, he does not omit to show his title to admittance in the next, by a lengthy and orthodox confession of faith. But, in order more clearly to understand the picture of manners placed before us in these memoirs, it will be necessary to mention a few historical particulars, which may help to place them in the right point of view.

In the year 1547, Duke Frederick the Third of Liegnitz, in Silesia, succeeded his father's dukedom, and also to his debts, which, for so small a territory, were considerable, and which he considerably increased. Being of a violent and arbitrary temper, he got into many quarrels with his



subjects, and by frequent unnecessary journeys, as well as other modes of extravagance, added greatly to their burdens, and so drew on himself the attention of the Emperor Ferdinand the First, who shared, with Duke George of Brieg, the opinion that if things went on in this manner, the dukedom would scarcely descend to his son, Duke Henry, then twelve years old, still less be secured to the collateral line of Brieg.

In the year 1557, when, in defiance of the admonition he had received from the head of the Empire, Duke Frederick went to France, and there dissipated more money, the above-mentioned Duke George of Brieg was sent to Liegnitz with an Imperial commission, which declared that since the Duke had long led an evil course, and had shown himself disobedient to the Emperor's commands, and had lately betaken himself to France, without doubt, he would do many unlawful things. Frederick, was therefore deposed, and Duke George of Brieg appointed guardian to his son Henry, who was of age, on whom the dukedom was now devolved. Afterwards, there was a temporary restoration of Frederick, but, on the repetition and aggravation of his former offences, he was arrested by order of the Emperor, and placed in confinement "in the Rose Chamber of his castle at Liegnitz," after the doors, windows, and stoves had been previously furnished with iron bars. It is here that we find him at the commencement of the autobiography. The worthy knight may introduce himself; though here and elsewhere where we accompany him, we must take the liberty of somewhat shortening the road.

"In the year 1552, on the Monday after St. John's day, was I—Hans von Schweinichen—born in the princely house and castle of Gradisberg, of my honoured parents, Sir George Schweinichen of Mertschutz, and his wife, the Lady Salome of Gladessin of Goerb, and eight days afterwards was baptized, and the name of Hans (Jack) given to me for that my birth was so soon after the day of St. John. And in order that my children, and others after my death, may know that I claim of right to be come of an ancient and noble race, I here give the genealogies of my noble and honoured father and mother, as well as the

names of the worthy and honourable godfathers and godmothers who answered for me at my baptism.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Being, therefore, as I have said, born in the year 1552, I was, up to the year 1558, brought up at Gradisberg by my beloved parents in the fear of God, and with great attendance of nurses and waiting maidens.

"In the year 1558, on the Monday after St. Margaret's day, the illustrious and high-born Prince, Duke Henry of Liegnitz and Brieg, being come to the full age of twenty-one years, the estates were by his guardian, Duke George of Brieg, and with the foreknowledge of his royal majesty at Bohemia, made over to him, and my father, at the special desire of his princely grace, moved to his castle of Mertschutz, and was appointed privy counsellor, but served more for nothing than for pay.

"When I had reached the age of nine years, and had attained to some little of my understanding, I was sent to the village clerk of Mertschutz to learn to write and read, and when I came out of school I used to be set to tend geese. But one day while I was keeping them, and they ran about too much, I managed to make them stand still by sticking bits of wood into their bills, and keeping them wide open, so that they would soon have been killed with thirst, had not my lady mother found it out, and given me a good thrashing. After this, I had no more geese to keep, but I got another office, which was to look for eggs in the stables and barns, and when I had got together three score, my mother used to give me three farthings, but that did not last long.

"When now I could stammer through a little reading, and make what they call crow's feet, my father carried me to his princely grace Duke Frederick, where he was in *custodia*, in the castle of Liegnitz, and it was settled that I should be put to study with the young Duke Frederick, under a preceptor who was kept for him, a Master Hans Pfizner of Goldberg, and my father gave me thirty-two silver groschen (about 8s. English) to buy books, and for

The preceptor had a room of his own, whither we had daily to go to learn Latin, and get the catechism, the litany, and the rosarium by heart, as well

as every day four *vocabula*, and when the week was over the repetition of the whole ; and because the preceptor was very strict with us, I used to buy myself off with the money that my lady mother, from time to time, sent me ; for it happened that the good man was fond of going after the pretty girls, and had no money. And so it came to pass that he was willing enough to look over my faults, and I was never beaten but twice all the while he was preceptor, though I well deserved to be. And as to eating and drinking, I was well off, and I had also to wait upon the old Duke, and sometimes to sleep in his room ; that is to say, when his princely grace was drunk, for then he did not like to go to bed.

“ And his grace also soon gave me another office, that I should be his cellarer,—namely, he had a certain allowance of wine out of Duke Henry’s cellars, and when he was not inclined to drink it, he used to make me put it into a cask that stood in his own chamber, which held about a pail, and when it was full, he invited some guests, and then they set to, and never left off till it was drunk out. His princely grace was at that time, when he was *in custodia*, very devout, and morning and evening, drunk or sober, he used to pray diligently, and all in Latin ; and he used to have his consort, the old duchess, with him in his chamber ; but all that I have seen, it does not become me to speak.

“ When his princely grace, the reigning duke, Henry came to see him, Duke Frederick would put everything aside, and they would have a good carouse together ; but I have often heard him say ‘ Son, as you keep me a prisoner now, so shall they hereafter keep you.’ ”

After thirteen years’ confinement the old duke died, and young Hans returned to his paternal castle, where he was chiefly occupied in domestic duties, overlooking and helping in the farming works, fishing, and waiting upon guests, keeping household accounts, &c ; with occasional jollifications, and frequent hints about pretty maidens, with whom he modestly esteems himself a favourite. One of his most serious attachments was to a young lady who was very fond of sugar, and for whose delectation he once expended no less a sum than two dollars in this dainty.

Nevertheless, he always seems particularly glad when he has got safe out of a flirtation, and generally breaks off with a demure observation that he saw it was not God's will that matters should proceed any farther.

In the year 1569 he accompanied Duke Henry when he went in grand state to attend the Polish Diet, on a speculation of being elected King of Poland, since the then King of Sigismund was very old.

"His princely grace had with him a hundred and fifty horsemen, and his carriage was surrounded by 16 guards with halberts, and otherwise well armed; and my father and I had to ride with gold chains round our necks, and I had five other young nobles to help me wait upon his grace and bring in the dishes. My father had dressed me in a fustian doublet garnished with velvet, and a pair of German slashed hose, one leg yellow and one black, with sixteen ells of silk pulled through; and we pages, as well as eighty of the horsemen, had velvet caps all with yellow feathers and silver hilted swords and daggers; our horses had large plumes of black and yellow feathers, so that from the front we boys could not be seen at all. Three of the pages had silver lace on their caps and three gold, and bore long gilt swords, and others, who were older, spears tipped with gold."

The Duke also carried with him costly presents; a crystal drinking cup enriched with diamonds and rubies, a sabre with a gold and silver sheath, also adorned with precious stones and other braveries which were presented to King Sigismund, with a Latin oration. "Each of us who presented them thought we should get a gold chain, but we got nothing, and the King answered our stately Latin in common Polish. On the same day the duke gave a grand banquet, at which Hans von Schweinchen had the honour to officiate as third carver, and two days after we were invited by the king, and got such a shabby dinner, that we would have had a better in our own lodgings, and the king only pledged his grace once out of the crystal beaker, and the whole dinner did not last more than two hours. The king presented the duke with two *timbers* (forty skins) of sable and two of *marten*, and my father and the chancellor got two sables and two *martens* each, and nobody else got any thing.

"As we were on our journey back and had come near the Vistula, one of our gentlemen had two boys stolen (though not without their own will), meaning to take them with us to Silesia, for they were good musicians and could play upon several instruments. But the Pole they belonged to found it out, and came riding after us, and came up with us at night just as we had got to the bank of the river, and would have his boys again. Though we were tolerably strong and well armed, the Pole had occupied the pass over the river and we saw that there were more than three thousand persons collected, and it seemed we should come to blows. But just as the horse were going at one another, the Pole found the two boys hiding behind a wall, so with that he took them out and drew off from the river, begging our pardon, and so, thank God, we got off with whole skin. But such heavy news awaited my father and me, on the other side, that I had rather the Poles had knocked me on the head. There was one sent to say that if my father would find his dear wife, and I my dear mother alive, we should hasten home all that we could. We would have set off that instant, but on account of the robbers on the road, who would have plundered his grace's silver waggon, we dared not leave the troop till we got to Kalisch. Then we rode day and night till we got to Mertschutz, but my beloved mother had been buried the Saturday before, whom I mourned not only with my clothes but in my heart all that year, keeping in the house all I could."

Sorrow it is well known softens the heart, and poor Hans had scarcely got over grief for the death of his mother, before he had two rather severe attacks of love, but on the whole got happily through them, and soon after that he was again summoned to the court of Duke Henry, and honoured with a confidential appointment about the person of his grace, who had previously done his father the honour of borrowing sundry sums of money of him, which he had small hopes of ever getting back, as the duke was already living at a great rate, and bidding fair to outdo his father in the amount of debt he should heap on his little state. Dancing and music, running at the ring, mummeries, and all kinds of diversions are going on every day, and all day long, and young Hans con-

gratulates himself that his "lines have fallen in pleasant places." The next year he accompanied his master to Posen, and the party lost their way on a heath and had to pass the night in the deep snow, only saving themselves from being frozen to death by cutting down trees and making great fires. "At last there came one, looking like a peasant, who said he would show us the way. Whence he came, or whither he was going, knew no man, nor much less who he was; but he could speak Polish, and Latin, and German. Him we followed, and when he had brought us right, he went, we could not tell where. No one in the place knew him, and I, myself, believe it was an angel."

Duke Henry of Liegnitz was not, indeed, precisely the person one might suppose the angels to feel any special anxiety about, as the reader will have frequent occasion to see. Here for instance is a characteristic little anecdote.

"His princely grace had ordered a banquet, but the duchess would not come to it on account of the Frau Kittlitgen, (the duke's mistress.) He sent a second and a third time, but she would not come; and then because the Frau Kittlitgen, who was with his princely grace in his room, never left off urging him that he should constrain the duchess to be obedient, his princely grace ran in a fury to the duchess's room. I as his bedchamber gentleman followed him. Then his grace began to say some hard things to the duchess, because she would not come to his table when he had invited many ladies and honourable persons. The duchess said she would not come to sit by the Frau Kittlitgen, and gave her a bad name, whereupon the duke, very angry, said she was no such thing, and with that he gave the duchess such a box on the ear, that she staggered back. I ran up, and took hold of his grace, till the duchess could get out of the room. He tried to go after her to beat her, but in a moment I had banged to the door of the chamber, and kept him off. His princely grace was very angry with me, and said it was not my business to tutor him—she was his wife and he would do what he liked with her. I gave him good words, said I had done all for the best, and hoped his princely grace would forgive me. That of

course it did not become me to tutor him, or to come between him and her grace his consort. But nothing would do but that he would be after the duchess, and at last I brought him away more by force than with his own will. After this, I got out of the way for a bit, and when his grace asked the other gentlemen where I was, none of them would tell. At last he would have that they should seek me out, and when I heard that I went to him."

After a while our good Hans, managed to appease the said princely grace, by promising to do his best to induce the duchess to make her appearance. The ambassador presented himself accordingly, drawing on his imagination for a description of the sorrow and repentance felt by the princely grace, on account of the box on the ear, promising that he would make the lady a handsome present, and in various ways make himself agreeable, as he had not done for a long time past. And though the poor duchess was at first very wrathful, and threatened vehemently, she was at last softened, so far, that on condition of the obnoxious Frau Kittlitzen dining at a side table with the other ladies, she agreed to come, and accounted to the company for the black-eye which the princely brute had given her, by saying she had struck it against a corner. And, thereupon, the company went merrily to table with the accompaniment of ten trumpets and two kettle drums.

"After this, on the 11th day of July, to Breslau, and afterwards to Cracow. His grace took with him twelve horsemen, and three coaches, meaning to visit the Wowode Peter Poraschken, in order to get him to help to have his grace chosen King of Poland. When we got to Cracow, we went to a hostelry, and in the morning the Wowode invited his grace, and us gentlemen, and there was a great crowd of Poles, who cried out 'That shall be our King!' and when they had drank his grace's health, they broke the glasses on each others' heads, which pleased my lord well. And after that there was a dance and all very merry. But his grace had a jewel that he wore hanging to a chain, worth 17,000 rix dollars, and this he gave to a Pole—he did not know who—to hold for him, and besides this, a purse with a hundred Hungarian florins, and that he gave to another, and forgot all about it.

"His princely grace, when he went home, was so very drunk, that he could hardly ride to his lodgings and two of us had to hold him up on his horse. And when we came to undress him, I saw that the chain and the jewel was gone, and also the purse; but, we could get nothing out of his grace; and I, too, was fuddled, for I had had to wait upon him with the drink, but full as I was, I could not sleep. I beat the boys to make them tell me, but I could get no news, and when in the morning I asked his grace, he remembered something about giving them to two of the Poles, but did not know who, and he could give no counsel. I would have asked of the Polish gentlemen, who had brought his grace home, but there had been such a noise and scuffle among them, that many had got great slashes. But when I did not know what to do, comes my father to me, and says, 'A Pole last night brought me a purse, and said, it belonged to my lord, and I put it in my pocket.' And when I took the purse and shook out the money, there were the hundred florins all safe and sound, and very joyful I was.

"It might be an hour after, when there comes a Pole, and asks for his grace's gentleman of the bedchamber, and he is brought to me; and thereupon, he hands me the chain and jewel, and says, 'my lord had given them to him to hold, and had not asked for them again, and he wishes now to deliver them to me.' And so our sorrow was turned into joy. I took the things with many thanks, and asked the Polish gentleman his name, making him stay and have a good carouse with us, and presenting him, in his grace's name, ten florins, which he took with great thankfulness."

By the year 1575, the dispute which had long been going on between the duke and his subjects, had risen to a great height. The younger brother, Duke Frederick, had been associated with him in the government, and in the autumn, his grace judged it expedient as well as pleasant, to set out on a rambling tour through the Empire. He paid a visit to Prague, on occasion of the coronation of Rudolph, as King of the Romans: and, as there were tournaments and various diversions going on, had soon spent all his money, and had to pawn his jewels to the



Jews, to raise more. The faithful Hans begged him to return home to Liegnitz, but instead of that he ordered brave new clothes, attiring his gentlemen in red damask, with black cloaks, trimmed with gold lace, and declaring his intention of going to Venice and joining the Armada, which the King of Spain was then preparing against England.

He afterwards took his departure in grand state, with one coach and six, and another with three horses, and a numerous suite of attendants; with not indeed much more than three hundred dollars in his treasury—but trusting to be able some how to “raise the wind” among his friends. “And so in this faith and *in God’s name*, on we went and took the way to Prague.” By the way, the princely grace, took the opportunity to make a call on a sister-in-law, and behaving very demurely for two or three days, modestly requested the loan of three hundred florins for the journey to Italy. The request was refused, however, in good round terms, and with an exhortation to the Duke to go home to Leignitz to his wife, in which case the sister-in-law professed herself willing to pay travelling expences, but as for the journey to Italy, she would not give one farthing for any such purpose, which my lord, took much amiss, and set off early the next morning.

The Duke next betook himself to Nuremberg, though he had no sort of business there, took up his quarters at an inn, and commissioned Hans to apply to the town council to lend him 4,000 florins; but the town council declined the loan, and then the princely grace bethought himself of another expedient. He wrote to his wife’s brother, the Margrave of Anspach, to beg the favour of the company of his two nieces at Neurenberg, and dispatched three gentlemen, ten mounted attendants, and a coach and six to fetch them, the real object of the manœuvre being, as usual, to borrow money; but the Margrave had heard of that little affair of the box on the ears, and had just as little inclination to allow his daughters to visit their princely uncle, as to put his hand in his pocket; and he recommended the princely grace, if he wished to be on good terms with him, the Margrave, to behave a little better to his wife; and so the ambassadors have to with-

draw, looking rather small, and having scornful music played after them as they leave the castle.

"Notwithstanding these rebuffs, however, we live merrily at Nuremberg till our money is almost gone ; but with some little profits, made at the gaming table, and leaving some jewels in pledge for the reckoning, we get away, with a present, moreover, from the city of a fine horse and a hundred florins."

The princely grace next alighted upon Augsburg, where he had just as little to do as at the other towns, but he liked the place and thought he could raise money there. Here, as usual, he leads a jolly life, on the fat of the land, getting stately presents of wine and fish, and all kinds of good things, from the citizens ; "he and his attendants," Hans says, "eating trout, and salmon, and poultry, and drinking Rhine wine and Muscatel, till they could eat and drink no more, and spending their time in nothing but going about to see the lions of the city, and looking after the pretty girls, and playing and carousing, and making merry, as people can well do at Augsburg."

His princely grace played every day with the *Geschlechter* (or great Patrician families), and many days won as much as two hundred florins, but he often lost it again, and on the whole did not gain above 170 dollars in more than three weeks.

On one occasion Hans was invited to a wedding where the parties were not of sufficient rank to have the honour of entertaining the duke ; but, as his princely grace did not choose to be left out, he resolved to go in the character of Hans's serving man. In the course of the morning he drank so much that Hans had to take him home again. As soon, however, as he had had a sleep, he returned to the charge, and sent to signify to the bridegroom that he would come to the dance that was to take place in the evening.

"To this the bridegroom was very willing and sent a coach for him, with three friends of the highest quality to fetch him, as the custom is here, and gave him princely entertainment ; and, whenever his grace would dance, two senators danced before him ; and it is otherwise the

custom in Augsburg that no one shall begin any dance till two persons, who wear red robes and long white sleeves, have danced the figure first. Whenever they turn, the persons dancing must turn too ; and, when they embrace each other, the young men may embrace the damsels they are dancing with, and the young men will give them money privately that they may do so very often, as I have done myself, and had many a hug for half a dollar. And seeing that he, who was my serving man, was now become again my lord and master, I asked his grace why he came, and he made answer that, seeing there were many pretty maidens who were giving me good words, he had come to look after me, and take me away, lest I should be caught by any of them ; and I must say that never, in my lifetime, have I seen so many beauties as these. The bride was all dressed in white damask and such like, and adorned beyond measure with chains and jewels ; and we were in a large grand hall, sparkling with gold and silver, and above a hundred lights, so that one might have thought oneself in Heaven, or that that was the true Paradise ; and, as I said before, the maidens were fair, and fine and gracious in their talk, and in the evening I drove home with a rich young lady, of the family of Herberg, to her father's house. It is said her father had two tons of gold ; he received me and entertained me as if I had been a count, and sent me back to my lodgings in a coach, and many men bearing torches. *If I had wanted to borrow two thousand dollars of him, I might have done so*, for he traded with Breslau, and knew my family ; and after that I was often invited by the rich people and the Geschlechter.

“ Once Herr Mark Fugger invited his princely grace, and such a banquet I have scarce ever seen. The Roman Emperor could not have been better entertained. The meal was served in a hall, on the walls of which there was more gold to be seen than paint, and the floor was of marble as smooth as if one was walking upon ice. There was a cross table, set with goblets of the finest Venetian glass, worth, it was said, more than a ton of gold. Now, Herr Fugger would present his highness, for a welcome, a most beautiful Venetian glass ship, full of wine, and most

finely wrought ; and, as I waited on his grace, I had to take it from the beaufet. But, as I cross the hall, having on new shoes, I slip, and down I come, and break the beautiful glass, and pour the wine all over my fine red damask clothes. There was a great deal of laughing ; but I heard afterwards that Herr Fugger had said he would not have given the ship for a hundred florins. But it was no fault of mine, for I had neither eaten nor drank ; indeed, afterwards, when I had got a little in my head, I walked a great deal steadier, and did not tumble down even when I danced ; and so I thought to myself that God would not have me to take pleasure in my fine clothes as I had done before, thinking myself one of the bravest there.

“For all this, we were all very merry, and afterwards Herr Fugger led his grace over his house, which was such a mighty big one, that the Roman Emperor and all his court would have had room in it ; and at last he led him into a little tower, where he had chains and jewels, and precious stones and coins, and pieces of gold as large as your head—such a treasure as he himself said was worth over a million of gold. Then he opened a chest, where lay heaps of ducats and crowns, and from about the middle of the tower, quite up to the top, was full of nothing but good dollars. They say that Herr Fugger has riches enough to buy an empire.

“He gave me a pretty present to make amends for my fall, and his princely grace expected one too ; but this time he got nothing but a good carouse. Afterwards his princely grace and I were often at Herr Fugger’s, and always grandly entertained.”

In the mean time, the princely grace has been running up a long bill at his inn, and his host begins to give intelligible hints about payment. Thereupon, Hans is dispatched to Herr Fugger to beg for a loan of 4,000 dollars ; but the Herr Fugger had apparently no inclination to part with his money to so worthless a vagabond as the princely grace, and declines very politely on the ground that he is about to lend a great sum to the King of Spain for his Invincible Armada. The next day, however, Herr Fugger sent the duke a present of two hundred crowns, a beautiful beaker, and a fine horse with black velvet housings,

which the princely grace accepted with great glee and many thanks ; and then, since nothing more was to be got from Herr Fugger, he attacked the Senate, and, with the assistance of the faithful Hans, induced them to lend him a fourth part of what he had asked—namely, a thousand dollars. This had, however, to be handed over to the host, whose reckoning now amounted to fourteen hundred, and he then agreed to give the duke credit for the remainder ; but," says Hans, " finding the host so ready at giving credit, his princely grace now resolved to give a feast ; he commanded that everything should be in the grandest style,—got a little ready money by pawning some silver things to the Jews, and then invited six senators, a count, a baron, two of the Fuggers, and four others from the patrician families, to dine with him."

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF A GERMAN KNIGHT—

On the day following this banquet the Duke and his followers were again *en route*. He found travelling more economical than remaining at an inn, as he could take advantage of the hospitable entertainment afforded at the various convents on the road, and on taking his departure he regularly made an attack on the purses of his entertainers.

The abbots, however, mostly decline lending, but make the princely grace a compliment of some thirty or forty crowns or so, which he pockets with great satis-

Thus he journies, jovial and careless to appearance, but keeping ever a steady eye on the main chance, till he reaches the Palatinate, and there meeting with the Prince of Conti, then at war with the King of France, valiantly enters into an agreement to assist him with three thousand horse and four thousand foot—with which

force he undertakes to appear at the rendezvous in Lorraine in the course of four weeks—the Duke to receive a certain allowance per man, and part of the pay to commence immediately. Poor Hans is “not a little frightened,” when he hears of this bargain.

He had before made an attempt to escape from this freebooting life he led in the duke’s service, by engaging himself in that of the Palsgrave Casimir, and Duke Henry had consented to this arrangement for awhile, thinking that Hans could do a little business for him at the same time. He had desired him to go to Nancy, where Duke Erich of Brunswick was keeping his wedding with the daughter of the Duke of Lorraine, and ask him to give him a horse for the expedition to France, and also to make a similar request to the Count of Salms, but he received from both extremely short answers. The Duke of Brunswick said it was his wedding, and he wanted his horses for himself, and if he didn’t, he would not give them to a Lutheran and a heretic, who would help to root out the old Catholic faith—and the Count said that Duke Henry would be joining with those who plundered his houses and his peasants, and that for his part he would rather give him something else than a horse. With these pleasant answers Hans went back to his master, who was in the camp at Annis with the Palsgrave, who was vexed as well as the duke, and so the next morning, when their graces left the place, they set fire to the village—which belonged, it seems, to the Count of Salms—and burnt it. “All this mischief,” Hans adds, “they might have prevented with a good word or a horse.”

“The Palsgrave then moved to Ramutz, a place about twelve miles off, with his troops, and lay there seven days waiting for the Swiss foot. While there he heard a report that the Duke of Brunswick and the Duke of Lorraine had been secretly getting together a force to attack him, and so, perceiving their treachery, the Palsgrave determined that wherever his men lay at night, in the morning they should set fire to their lodgings, and so when we got up in the morning we sometimes saw ten or twelve finely-built villages all burning at once—that one could have wept to see it—and this was done all the

way to the French borders, except the mills and the nobles' houses, they were spared."

Hans, though he does rather grieve over the damage, has hopes of making his harvest out of this French expedition, but Duke Henry had no intention of parting with so valuable a servant, and after a while insists on his return, to which he dutifully though dolefully submits, bringing back with him a sum of eighty dollars, which he lends to the princely grace, and of course sees no more of them. Returning to Strasburg, with three coaches and thirty-two horsemen, they had to cross a mountain by a narrow and dangerous road, and as they reached the summit they saw beneath them in the valley a considerable troop of armed horsemen, without being able to make out whether they were friends or enemies. Hans rode forward to reconnoitre; but the path was so narrow that it was impossible for him to turn round again, and presently the duke came up behind him, "the perspiration running over his face," to ask what that was, and when Hans mentioned his suspicion that they were enemies, proposed in great haste to turn back.

"I showed his grace, however, that we could not go back, the carriages were already on the top of the mountain and must have been seen, and, friends or enemies, we must go on. As soon as they in the valley see that we are coming they fall into order—five hundred strong they are—and remain quite still, and then we fall to considering what is to be done. The duke thought if they were French they would certainly take away two young gentlemen, the brothers of the Prince of Conti and of the Admiral, whom he had undertaken to convoy to Strasburg. I advised therefore that they should give me six horsemen and a trumpeter, and I would go and learn who they were; and when they in the valley see this, they too send off six men and a trumpeter, and we come galloping up to one another, they calling out to know who I was, and I to know who they were, and in such speech I recognize an old comrade and crony, who was in the service of the Duke of Bavaria. When the others perceived that we knew each other they too saluted in a friendly manner, and told us it was the Duke of

Bavaria and the royal widow of France, and that they were going to Strasburg. Thereupon we let the trumpets sound in token of friendship, and rode back each to our own men. Afterwards we all went into Strasburg together, and the Duke of Bavaria invited his grace to him, and we were all very merry after our fright.

"His grace staid four days in Strasburg, and as we were leaving it, going over a long wooden bridge there is over the Rhine, we found there was a toll to pay. His grace, however, as a prince, was toll free, though the toll-keeper did not know it, and when we tried to go on he rang a bell, and the people came running as thick as if it snowed men. I was behind and stopped to tell them, and in the meantime they break away three planks from the bridge, so that I cannot go on. But I had got some wine in my head and a good horse under me, and I gave a leap, and God granted me to reach the other side. If the horse had missed I should have been thirty ells deep in the Rhine."

From Lichtenau Hans was sent to the Margrave of Baden, as usual, to try and borrow money, as well as to beg for a horse again for his expedition to France. The money was refused, but the Margrave expressed himself willing to *stand* a horse, and sent a fine one accordingly; and then the adventurers went on to Heidelberg, where they were hospitably received by the elector—begged as usual for a loan, as usual were refused—and then went on to Frankfort-on-the-Maine, where the princely grace was to get half a month's pay—that is, a thousand crowns. A few men and officers were got together, some small sums paid to them; there was eating, and drinking, and gaming, till most of the money was gone, and then the party went on again to seek their fortune.

The first person at whose door they knock, a certain count who lives about thirty miles from Frankfort, "has no money, and thanks God when he is rid of us;" with another, a Count John of Nassau, Hans performs one of the toping feats, of which he makes frequent mention.

"Since I had got the credit of being able to drink any of the count's people under the table, the count thought privately to have his revenge of me, with a certain



measure that they call a Welcome, which holds three quarts. I took the measure outside the door, and tried whether I could manage it, and I thought I could, and so when I had made a trial, I told them to fill it, and begged of the Count permission to drink to his people's health, and then I drank it off, and all the gentlemen wondered, and the count's marshal tried to pledge me in it, but could not; so he had to drink it twice over for a punishment, but only at many draughts, and he was so intoxicated after it that they had to take him away, but I remained to the end of the meal. And after that I had peace with the drink, for none of them would try it with me.

"The next day the count was invited to a wedding of a Count of Hanau, and he asked his grace if he would go too, and his grace did not wait to be asked twice, but said he would. He had no money, however, but he told me to try and borrow some of the Count. The Count would not lend, but the Countess lent him two hundred dollars, and his grace enjoyed himself greatly at the wedding for five days, and did not think at all how things were going on at home, but spent one hundred, and presented to the bride a fine gilt ship—but that he got on credit from the jeweller, and I had to be security for it. There were at the wedding twenty-eight princes, counts, and barons, and thirty-two countesses, baronesses, and ladies."

After this the duke went back to Frankfort, got another thousand crowns paid him on account of the French service, a quantity of new clothes for himself and his suite, and kept an open table for the officers he had engaged; thinking, perhaps, according to the usual tactics of gentlemen of this class, that by appearing to have money he should the more easily succeed in getting more. But the Senate turned a deaf ear to his solicitations for a loan; and though several persons professed their willingness to lend to Hans personally, they would have nothing to do with the princely grace, to whom he was prudent enough to say nothing of these friendly offers—"but earnestly besought him to consider what he was doing, and as he could get no money, and had none to expect

from home, he might get into great trouble, and I begged him to go back to Leignitz. But all my begging and exhortation was of no effect, for his grace said he should go to Cologne on the Rhine, he was sure he could get some money there."

This time Hans managed to pay everybody, except one who had furnished some cloth, and the duke quitted the city in great state with ten coaches and twenty-two horsemen, though not with more than about seven pounds in his pocket, and having appointed the captains and men to meet him at Cologne, where he assured them he would let them have some pay. The first day they got only as far as Maintz, where they had a friendly reception from the elector, though he excused himself from complying with the modest visitor's request for a loan, saying it would not be becoming in him to lend to one who was serving against the pope and the King of France. But, "in order to get rid of us," he presented his grace with fifty crowns, after which his grace took his departure with bag and baggage, going merrily down the Rhine with horses and carriages in three boats, and having eight trumpeters and a kettle-drum blowing and thumping away lustily the whole day; "and very pleasant it was on the River Rhine, with the most beautiful towns and castles, and well-built villages lying on both sides." The next halt was at the castle of Rheinfels, where the party was kindly received by the Palsgrave, who showed especial favour to Hans on account of having known his father. "When his grace saw how good the Palsgrave was to me, he called me to him, and told me I might as well get two hundred dollars in my own name from him; he was sure he would not refuse them. I would, however, do no such thing, but told his grace it did not become me to borrow money in a strange country, for I could not pay it back again. His princely grace was not much pleased with this saying of mine, but he was obliged to be content with it. Thereupon he commanded me to go in his name to the Palsgrave, which as a servant of course I had to do, and beg that he would lend him five hundred dollars till we got to Cologne, when his grace would make it good again. I excused myself at the same time for being

obliged to ask this ; and the Palsgrave took my excuse very kindly, but he would lend his grace nothing, though he offered, if I would, to lend me a hundred crowns for myself. This I could not take, but when he saw that it was not my wish to get money from him, though my master and all of us were much in want of it, he gave me twenty crowns for myself, and told me to keep them privately against I should want them. When I told his grace that I had not been able to do anything with the Palsgrave he was much displeased, for he had not more than two dollars left ; and as cats learn to mouse when they have nothing to eat, he now went himself to the Palsgrave but he got no answer at all, only the Palsgrave desired he would send me to him in his chamber. There he told me he would lend his grace money only that he knew he should never get it again, and whether it was true that his grace had none left. I told him that he had none but two dollars, whereupon the Palsgrave gave me a hundred dollars, and desired me to present them to my master. So I come back and tell the duke, and his grace is right merry when he sees the money. But about my twenty crowns I say nothing."

These hundred dollars are all gone, however, by the time the party get to Cologne. They came up to the shore with great pomp, the eight trumpeters blowing with all their might, and though the weather was bad crowds of people came running to the bank of the river to see them land, "thinking, no doubt, that we are rich people, and have money in plenty, though I can truly say that his princely grace had not in his pocket more than a dollar and a half, and that he gave away to the poor people as we went along to our lodgings, so that all the money we carried into them was about eleven pence (14 *Abbas*).

"It happened, however, that my dear father had given me a gold chain to make use of in case I should ever find myself in distress, and this chain I had always carefully kept till we got to Cologne, but now I had to take it, and I sent it by one of his grace's gentlemen to a Jew, and got sixty-five dollars for it, and these I gave to my master. I asked him to lend me six dollars of it, but

his grace refused, which I thought hard as the chain was mine."

Of these sixty-five dollars thirty-one had to be sent to Bonn, where his princely grace was in debt for his last night's lodging, and had been obliged to leave a man and horse in pledge, and in the evening came some "stately music" for the entertainment of the illustrious visitor, who of course had to fee the musicians. Here in Cologne the host was a Spaniard, who "*victualled and drinked us*" of the best, and thought he had got a good customer, as the duke had come with a train of forty-five persons and thirty-two horses. When honest Hans came to reckon with him the next morning he found that the bill amounted already in the one day to eighty-two dollars, whereat he was "not a little frightened," and took the liberty of reminding his highness of what might be the end of this. "But his grace did not give me many good words in answer, and said in a day or two when he became known he was sure to get money. I should make an agreement with the landlord at so much a head which I did; those who dined at his grace's table for a dollar, those who ate with the gentlemen half a dollar, and for every servant nine pence, and for this there was to be wine for gentlemen and servants, a quart of wine each at dinner and at bed-time; what more than this was drank should be put on a score and paid for separately."

On Sunday morning the senate sent a compliment of thirty measures of wine, each holding about three quarts, and gave his grace the best words. It is customary now to send wine in earthen pitchers, though formerly it was sent in great silver flagons belonging to the town; but a certain Count of Arberg to whom this compliment was made, took the silver flagons away with him, and after that the wine has been always sent in earthenware. They send it to every noble who comes into the town. The wine was brought by five-and-twenty persons, who had coats half white and half red, as have also the pastors here, and there comes with them a fine band of music."

His grace is invited to dinner by the town, and he also receives guests, and there is much toping. But when

Saturday comes round the host shows an inclination for his money, for the bill amounts to five hundred and seventy-eight dollars, and neither the princely grace nor the faithful servitor have any notion where it is to come from. Hans must recommend the host "to have patience," and put a good face on the matter, saying his grace's secretary who has the money has not arrived yet ; so the host is pacified for the present, and agrees to go on in faith and hope for eight days longer.

"When his grace heard this he thought he should like to make himself known and invite company, as perhaps, somehow or other, that would bring in money. But as money was always going out for common things, his grace gave me two golden roses to pledge, which I did for fifty-seven dollars, though they were worth full a hundred, and also two rings which the elector had given him. For these I got sixty dollars though they were worth a hundred and fifty, and I tried here and there to get a loan, but got only fair words. In the meantime come the captains of horse and foot whom his grace had engaged at Frankfort for the expedition to France, and told to come here, and we had them daily at table, which was served in right princely style with eight trumpeters blowing, and kettle-drums beating, so that the people came running out of all the streets thinking a king must be there."

In the midst of all this grandeur, however, inevitable Saturday comes round again. This week's bill amounts to 643 dollars, and the landlord has certainly now a mind to be paid. Neither the sweetest words nor the most earnest exhortations to patience have any effect upon him for a long time, but at last he falls a victim to eloquence and to the skilful reproduction of the story of the secretary, and agrees to wait yet another eight days, but after that will certainly, unless he gets his money, furnish no more victuals and drink. The duke is now compelled to take the captains of horse and foot into his confidence, and begs their counsel in the solution of a problem that becomes more difficult every Saturday, but they can think of nothing but applying to the senate of Cologne for a loan of 10,000 dollars, which after former experience does not seem very hopeful. We can try, however, and Hans sets

forth on his embassy, and has an audience appointed for the next day.

He found the city authorities in a spacious chamber hung with fine tapestry, the three Burgomasters on seats raised on three steps above the rest, "as if a king sat there in his majesty;" below them on either side eight stately looking old gentlemen, and behind them four-and-twenty guards very handsomely dressed, and with side-arms and halberds.

The Burgomaster descended two steps to receive the envoys of the Prince of Liegnitz, and ordered chairs to be placed for them, and dismissed the guards; but knowing what their errand is, the envoys are somewhat abashed by this solemn reception, especially Hans who is to make the speech. He did make it however, occupying as much time as possible with the titles of his master, taking care not to omit any one of the complimentary epithets to which the personages present may consider themselves entitled, and making considerable use of the figure of speech called *rigmarole*, before he comes to his real business. He tells how his princely master has been summoned from his territory of Liegnitz, to afford assistance in the present troubles in France, and how he is about to raise a body of 4000 horse, and a regiment of foot for the peculiar benefit and protection of the Low Countries, and the most praiseworthy and highly renowned free imperial city of Cologne—not to mention all Christendom? How the power of the King of Spain will certainly be much weakened thereby, to the manifest use and benefit of the said highly renowned free imperial city of Cologne. That another result immediately to be anticipated from the military operations of the duke, is the keeping the navigation of the river Rhine open, so that vessels may pass freely up and down, even to Friesland and Zeeland. That further, the actual presence of Duke Henry of Liegnitz in the city of Cologne is of signal use and advantage to the said highly renowned city, for as it is known that he has a considerable force already assembled, it is not likely that as long as he is here, any one will venture to attack it. Also the orator reminds his hearers of the friendship that has always subsisted between the Prince of Liegnitz and the

good city of Cologne, a fact well known to all persons acquainted with history ; and he mentions that as Liegnitz lies four hundred miles off, and there is sometimes difficulty in getting money from thence, his master has been put to some inconvenience for want of the ready, and therefore would be obliged, if the highly praiseworthy Senate would just in a friendly way accommodate him with ten thousand dollars for a short time, for security of which favour he offers his princely bond, as well as the deposit of the appointment with Prince of Conti, worth two thousand crowns a month. And although this would be more security than was needed, his princely grace offers in addition to do knightly service for the city of Cologne, with 4000 men for the space of one month, without receiving any pay—and never on any occasion or at any time to do any damage to the said free imperial city. When Hans had finished his oration, a grey haired old man the Syndicus rose up, and with long winded polite *betitling* of all parties—the Senate of Cologne, the duke, and his envoys, requested the latter to withdraw. Three hours passed before they were again summoned, during which delay, the princely grace getting impatient, had sent several times to know what was doing. Then the embassy was summoned to appear again, entering in all form with due attendance of guards, &c., to receive a polite—no answer—only that : “ In a few days his princely grace shall have an answer in writing,” and thereupon they took leave, and were escorted to their lodgings by thirty of the city guards, at sight of whom Duke Henry felt rather alarmed, and inquired of the host what it might mean, but was informed it was the custom to give this honourable escort to all ambassadors of princes.

Four days passed—the duke looking forward confidently to a favourable answer, Hans troubled by many misgivings. On the fifth he was sent privately to one of the burgomasters, and got much politeness, and dainty victuals and drink, but no answer, only a promise of one.

Two days more and our host is getting clamorous. He says he knows we have got no money from the Senate (for he has notice of everything). At last there came

three old gentlemen, before whom marches one dressed in red and white, bearing in his hands a parchment with a large seal ; at sight of which the princely grace is in high glee, and says:—"Now Hans, we shall get some money." The messengers are admitted, and make a long speech, larded with many compliments, echoing the previous speech of Hans, and highly laudatory of the same, and finally they present the missive of the renowned Senate, with which they are charged, which the duke eagerly reads ; but finds at the end of long winding passages of politeness, a flat refusal.

The Senate nevertheless have commissioned their messengers to present a small token of their regard in the shape of a little box containing 200 gulden, which of course his greedy grace instantly accepts, and hopes at the same time, for all that has been said, the Senate does not mean to disappoint the confidence he has had of their being willing to help him out of his little difficulties. Various replies and rejoinders are interchanged, the "highly praiseworthy Senate" admirably illustrating the old maxim of *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*—for nothing can be more polite, and nothing more obstinate. All the while his princely grace is begging all round the country, of all the counts and nobles within reach for what he calls loans—but to no purpose.

"In the meanwhile that his grace is lying here at Cologne trying to raise money, and even thinking to get rich by the French expedition, but yet can get neither money nor anything else, and I for my part know not why his grace will not listen to my solicitations, and go home—there came news that his princely grace has been deposed by his Imperial Majesty from the principality, and his younger brother, Duke Frederick the fourth of that name, appointed to reign in his stead." And now our host is becoming very pressing indeed for his money, and the reckoning for these four weeks comes to 2,354 dollars. He begs his grace for an acknowledgment in his own handwriting, which his grace gives him, thinking that he will then have patience somewhat longer.

"But instead of that, he goes with it straight to the Electoral Court at Cologne, and gets an arrest on the



horses and moveables, until the 2,354 dollars shall be paid ; and on the next morning at 7 o'clock, there comes a person dressed in red and white, and with a long red staff, to arrest all the goods and chattels of his grace, the Duke Henry of Liegnitz, now within the city of Cologne, and order that the same shall be sold if the half is not paid within eight days. What is to be done now we do not know, but I go the same hour to the court and show them that his grace is a prince of the empire, and therefore he and his are free of their jurisdiction ; and that his grace will protest against this proceeding before the Chamber at Speier. But if they will take off the arrest, his grace, without any such, means to pay the host in a princely manner. The court however answered, that it was so privileged that it would arrest the goods of his Majesty the Emperor himself, but that his grace's person should be free, and also his servants. They must give every one his rights and leave no one helpless. but if his grace thought he could obtain anything from the Elector, he was now at a village only two German miles off, and he could send to him."

Hans dispatched accordingly finds the spiritual dignitary making exceedingly merry, and dancing in his garden with a number of handsome maidens, and he joins, nothing loth, in the jollification ; but he can obtain no favour for the princely grace.\* The Elector declines interfering with his courts, especially in favour of one who is a heretic, and has accepted an appointment from the enemies of the Catholic faith. Should he show friendship to such a one, he could not answer it to the Holy Father at Rome.

The goods and chattels arrested, including twenty-three horses, were estimated at rather more than the amount of the debt, but as the law proceedings necessary for the creditor to get possession of them lasted eighteen weeks, during which time he had to feed the three and twenty horses, and the six men who waited on them ; the landlord might be regarded as being himself, what in modern slang is called *sold!* whereat Von Schweinichen greatly rejoices.

During this residence at Cologne, although the talk, as usual, is mostly of cash, there is mention of divers frolics,

which afford edifying peeps into the manners of the time.

The duke has a fancy to get into a convent of nuns, who have the reputation of not being very strict in their observance of monastic rules ; and he and Hans go with a party of mummers, in the disguise of Spanish maidens, and pass a jovial night, dancing and drinking with the fair recluses, not to speak of further scandal. A comrade who had a love affair in progress, had appointed to meet his lady in the churchyard, but the loving pair had the misfortune to fall into a pit full of the bodies of the lately dead, and which the monks had left open to receive others. After this pleasant adventure, the cavalier came home and lay down by the side of our hero for the remainder of the night ; and our hero is greatly frightened, but is quit for the fright.

We also find frequent mention of certain sober flirtations in which Hans almost always seems to be acting on the defensive, and to be heartily glad when he can cry off. Towards the end of the year 1756, we find our diarist at Emmerich, where we are introduced to an authentic lubber-fiend or brownie, one of those cleanly and useful household sprites which we fear are to be seen no more in these days.

“Two days before his grace came, a spirit or ghost had come and washed all the rooms clean, made the beds, and cleared up everything in the house. On the third night it came before my bed, and it had a cudgel such as the fools use to have, and flourished it over my head. As I waked and saw this I was horrified, and would have cried out, but his princely grace was asleep, so I only let it be and commended myself to God. The hobgoblin then left me ; and, as there were lights in the chamber, I saw that it went into a corner *and laughed !*”

“The next morning I told his grace, but he would not believe me ; and the night after I had been drinking and slept very sound, and so the goblin went to Caspar Heilung, who lay near me. He cried out ‘Oh help me, dear Holy Mary !’ but though I heard him, I would say nothing ; and afterwards the spectre came on my side, and laughed quite loud, and then it vanished I could not

tell how." Simply credulous as Hans is in matters of this kind, some vague suspicion appears to have occurred to him that the visitation might not be a supernatural one, for he says—"In the morning I said to the maidens in the house, that they should get rid of the ghost, or otherwise it might come to some mischief; but they told me it showed great good luck both for my master and myself that it had come to me first;" and so the worthy Hans is no longer sceptical.

"After this, when the cook in the kitchen left the pots and kettles unwashed, by the morning they were always made clean and bright. They told me I ought to set it something to drink, which I then did; mostly milk or beer, mixed with honey and sugar; and it used to go and take it up from a bench where I had put it, and take it up and drink, nodding its head to me as I lay in bed. While it was appearing, his grace and I had all sorts of good luck, and never any thing happened contrary; and I was never afraid of it except the first time, and also the last—which happened in this way.

"His grace had been wishing to get up early one morning, and he called me to make a light and rouse up the boy who used to make him his morning drink. The boys slept up stairs in a chamber over us, and a narrow winding staircase led to it. As I came to the middle of this staircase there meets me the spectre, whereat I was so frightened that I did not know where I was, or what I should do. But it passed on, touching me as it went, and then it began to laugh, and said—'You do not know your good fortune, but you shall see what will happen to you.' But after that time it was never seen by any one. And sure enough when we had lost the goblin, his grace and I had only bad luck."

When his princely grace had reached the condition commonly described as being on "last legs," a bright idea struck him, which he forthwith communicated to Hans. This was nothing less than to marry Queen Elizabeth of England, then in the height of her power and fame. Hans was to go over immediately on this hopeful errand, and besides the vicarious wooing, to request her majesty if she had such a thing as fifty thousand crowns lying idle,

to lend them to the princely grace. This was rather too much even for Von Schweinichen's faithful service and unquestioning obedience. He positively refused the commission, and asked the duke what had put such a folly into his head, suggesting also the trifling difficulty of his duchess being still alive, as all the world knew. But his grace did not think this an insuperable obstacle, for had not Luther allowed the Landgrave of Hesse this little extra indulgence. Hans, nevertheless, persisted in declining to present himself before Queen Elizabeth on such a mission, having some wish for the present to keep his head on his shoulders, but if his princely grace would think of some more reasonable business for him, he would like right well to go to England. But his grace sulked after this for some days, and the journey to England came to nothing.

It now occurred to the fertile genius of the duke, that if he was not to marry Queen Elizabeth, he might enter the service of the King of Spain, who was at war with her, as well as engaged in a quarrel with his subjects here in the Netherlands. Borrowing was becoming every day more difficult, for the princes and nobles in all the country round had been completely "sucked out" (*ausgesauget*); and except a neat little stroke of business which his princely grace had done, by getting goods on credit from the jewelers, and then pledging them to the Jews for half their value, nothing had been coming in for some time. To the Spanish camp, therefore, he will go privately, and see what is to be done. His grace is no respecter of persons, where his own interests are concerned, and has no inconvenient religious scruples. But in order not to expose his valuable person to any unnecessary risk he resolves to go in disguise as Hans von Schweinichen's servant, even though it involves the necessity of dressing him, cleaning his boots, rubbing down the horses, and performing other functions of a useful man of all work. But they had scarcely entered the Spanish camp, when a waiting damsel in the inn recognised Von Schweinichen, and ran up to give him a joyful welcome, calling him by name, whereat, of course, the adventurers were greatly terrified, and though they purchased, for a dollar, the silence of the

maid, they felt their position somewhat too critical, since the inevitable consequence of a premature discovery would have been a prison for the duke, and a rope for his faithful servitor, and so it was considered advisable to get back to Emmerich as fast as they could. On the failure of this project, his grace lends a willing ear to a suggestion offered by some of the "war men," whom he has about him. It seems that about a mile from Emmerich there lay a fortified house, belonging to the King of Spain, and the commandant of which was the brother of the duke's hostess. In this house there was a garrison of not more than a hundred men, and it was a strong place, and had several villages attached to it. The plan was to invite the captain and his officers to a hospitable entertainment, and then make them drink so much that they should not be able to return home. Then in the night the duke's men were to go quickly up to the house, and as, when they were heard approaching, they would be taken for those who belonged to the house, they would easily gain admittance, and could then plunder the house and make excellent booty. His grace, not being troubled with many scruples of conscience, thought this an admirable plot, and agreed to it directly. The friendly invitation was gladly accepted by the Spanish officers, and the messenger who carried it filled with good liquor. The appointed day came, the expected guests arrived, the banquet was served, and but little difficulty experienced in inducing the visitors to drink themselves into a sufficiently helpless condition. But behold, when the time came for the performance of the next act of the drama, it was discovered that the duke's men were no less drunk than the Spaniards, and quite incapable of undertaking their parts, and so the ingenious and honourable device miscarried.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY (*continued.*)

THE year 1577 began "very heavily." His grace is at present spunging on the Duke of Cleves, and has found it convenient to leave his suite behind at Emmerich, having vanished one fine morning, without giving Hans any previous notice of his intention, taking with him only one or two servants, and leaving behind him a note in which he recommends that some horses shall be sold, encloses a certain gold chain for present purposes, and promises with God's help "to come back soon with money." "And herewith a good morning my heart's dear Hans."  
(Signed) Henry, Duke.

When Hans read this note he knew as he says "what o'clock it was (*was es geschlagen hatte*)," that his grace would not be in any hurry to come back again, and the chain which he had generously left happened not to belong to him, but to one of his suite. While Hans was sitting grievously perplexed, there came to him Martin Seidenberg, one of the duke's gentlemen, "a good merry fellow, who liked to talk with me. He told me I should not fret, that he would tell me a way to get money. When I asked him how or where, he nodded, and said that there was a Jew living at Humpel, about a mile off, and that I should send and ask him if he had five hundred dollars that he could lend upon a pledge. I told him I had no pledge, so that would be of no use; but he persisted that was what I should do. So, as he would have it so, I sent to the Jew, whom I knew before, and he said he would lend the money on a pledge, and that he would bring it the next morning at nine o'clock. When Martin Seidenberg hears this, without saying anything to me, he takes a white horse of ours, and blacks it all over, and disguises himself, and goes and hides in a little wood which the Jew has to pass through, and when he comes, sets upon him, and takes the bags of money, which the Jew was carrying in a little tub on his shoulders, and, so away with it upon his horse.

The Jew made a great cry, and as it was near the town the people come running to the place and after Seidenberg. But he takes some of the money out of the bags and throws it down, and the people stop to pick it up, and so he gets off, and nobody knows where he goes to. After this he quickly washed his horse white again, and is back in the town before the Jew.

Of all this I know nothing, and not long after comes the Jew in, and complains to me of what has happened to him, and begs me to lend him some horses to go after the fellow in the wood, and Seidenberg directly offers to go and help him find the thief, with which I am well content. I ask the Jew if he should know the horse again if he saw it, and he says yes. It was a black horse. Now there were no black horses in his grace's stables. Seidenberg is very diligent in the search, but of course he does not find the robber, and the next morning he comes in to me and throws a sack of money upon my bed. I asked him where he got it, and he said this and that, but as I was not satisfied, he at last confessed to me that it was taken from the Jew, and all about it. Which money I would by no means take, but as I was very shabby in my clothes Seidenberg gave me twenty dollars for a doublet, and kept the rest, and went with it after his grace."

Poor Hans has after this a weary time of it in Emmerich, —over head and ears in debt, not of his own but his master's, and the only comfort he had is in the petting of two elderly maidens who lived in the house, and who lent him money and showed him many kindnesses, some of which indeed appear to be somewhat pointed. On Twelfth night, for instance, it was the custom in every house to choose a king and queen, and this time the lot fell on Hans and one of the elderly *young ladies* aforesaid, who thereupon invited him to a banquet and a dance and other merry doings, so that on that night he "forgot all his care and trouble."

Also the queen sent the king a golden chain worth a hundred crowns to wear for her sake, and he has great difficulty the next day in getting her to take it back. "I was a fool," he adds "that I did not keep it," and he might perhaps have done so, but that he had some fears of bewitchment from it.

It would be long to tell of all the tribulations that

befel poor Hans from the wrath of butchers and brewers, and bakers, and others, whom his princely grace had honoured with his custom; the upshot is that after undergoing inflictions of the law for a considerable time, he is compelled to sneak out of Emmerich, bid it farewell "in God's name," and once more turn his face homewards a sadder and a wiser man. Sometimes getting a lift in a peasant's cart, sometimes trudging along wearily on foot, but rejoicing in the prospect of once more seeing country and kindred, from whom he had been absent two years and a half. He had reached to within a few miles of Leipzig, when by a singular chance he encountered a messenger, who had been sent from Liegnitz, in search of him, and had not the least idea in what direction to look. But the joy of the wayfarer at this unexpected meeting was soon turned into sorrow, when he heard the news the messenger had brought—"sad, sorrowful, heart-breaking news, that my beloved father, George von Schweinichen had departed this life about a month before."

It is one of the many proofs that all the bad company Hans had been keeping, and the scampish life he had been compelled to lead, had left unspoiled the simple honesty of his nature—that his heart is still warm and true to the domestic affections. When he heard these tidings, he says he could not speak, and felt ready to burst with grief; and as misfortunes never come single, the same letter that told of his father's death mentioned also that the paternal castle of Mertschutz had fallen into the hands of a certain Christopher Schweidnitz, a relation, who professed to have some legal claim upon it.

"This too vexed me much, so that I had to sit down upon a stone, and it was two hours before I had strength enough to get to the city of Leipzig. But I consoled myself as a Christian, and laid my grief and trouble before God, and prayed that 'He would enable me to get to Silesia. And that Almighty God might grant my dear father a blessed rest, and a joyful resurrection.' Amen."

It was nearly a month from the time he left Emmerich, (travelling in a slow and painful manner), before he arrived once more in his native place, and was joyfully welcomed by his brothers and sisters; but strangers held the home



of his ancestors, and to the great surprise of Hans, his father's debts were found to be so considerable that there seemed just then small prospect of getting them paid.

In a few days he was sent for by the now reigning Duke Frederick, to call him to account for not having paid his duty before, and also for certain expressions he was said to have uttered in his lodgings in Liegnitz, to the effect that Duke Frederick would not remain long in his place, and tending to bring him and his government into contempt, also to enquire where Duke Henry was at present, and what his intentions were?—how and when he purposed returning to the duchy—what force he had with him? and so on. To these and many other questions Hans answered stoutly,—that as to Duke Henry he did not know what he purposed, and that if he did, it would ill become him to tell his master's secrets. That he could not say precisely what force the duke had at his command, but he knew he had great friends among the princes of the empire. That he Hans von Schweinichen, was, however, no spy, but a man of honour, and that he would live and die faithful to his master the Duke Henry, though he would also, as in duty bound, render all obedience to Duke Frederick, as his sovereign, now placed in authority over him by his Majesty the Emperor. To threats of punishment, Hans only replied, that Duke Frederick could if he was so minded punish him, but that he would take care to give him no cause, and begged that he would remain his gracious prince and lord.

After this spies were set to watch Hans, but could find out nothing against him, and it was not long before the worthy Duke Henry turned up again. He desired Von Schweinichen to undertake for him a negotiation for his reconciliation with the emperor, which he so far effected as to obtain an order that if Duke Henry would return to Silesia, his brother should make him a certain allowance. At the appointed time, Hans rode out with all the friends he could muster. They were thirty-seven horsemen and two trumpeters, "all with yellow feathers in their hats," to meet and do honour to his fallen master. At first, they met only a lacquey, with a note addressed to Hans—very loving and gracious, in which his grace professes his

intention of coming the next day, and takes occasion to add a request that Hans will bring two hundred florins with him; the next day he does accordingly make his appearance, quite in state, with two coaches, one with six and the other with four horses, and eighteen mounted attendants. The coaches had been hired at Nuremberg.

"And as soon as his grace came up the very first words he said were: 'Well, and now you have got me *what will you give me?*' Then his grace got out of his coach and went with me into a field that was near at hand, and walked up and down for half an hour while I told him of all that had happened, and how matters stood now."

Afterwards his grace presented Hans to a train of new attendants he had brought with him, as his master of the household, and as the people of the little town of Gorlitz, where he had made his entry, had sent him a quantity of wine and fodder for the horses, the princely grace made himself extremely comfortable, leaving, as was his wont, the morrow to take care of itself. But with that morrow irrevocable fate brought the reckoning, amounting, for this one evening's jollification, to 284 dollars. "This I brought according to custom to his grace, but he only burst out a laughing, and said, 'Dear Hans, you would have me come back, and so now you must take me out of pawn as you can, for I have got no money.'

"What to do I knew not, so I went to Peter Schellendorf and my cousin and told them how matters stood, and they too were not a little frightened, but we put our hands to the work, and Peter Schellendorf got on his credit from a burgher three hundred dollars which we gave his grace, and he gave in pledge a jewel of great value. Then I took the money and paid our host; and then went on with his grace in God's name to Domiswalda, to my kinsman Heinrich Schweinichen. The next day we went on again to Hanau, and there we found there was to be a wedding, for Heinrich Schellendorf was to give away a daughter of Melchior Lutwitz. And for this reason kitchen and larder were well furnished, and all the chambers with beds. Now Von Schellendorf and his wife were afraid, and thought nothing else but that his grace and his serving-men would eat up everything, so that there would be no wedding, especially that this Schellen-

dorf was in great disfavour with his grace, so that it was thought he would take the opportunity to be revenged on him. For this reason Schellendorf and his wife begged and prayed of me that I would do my best with His grace that he should be content and allow the wedding to go on, and let alone the provisions, and also do no damage to the beds. And this at last I did get him to agree to, though he told me that it was true he had been minded to stop the wedding and eat up all the victuals. And so he left the whole house for the Schellendorfs except one room, and we had a kitchen set up in the market-place where we cooked for his grace. With this I got myself a good name all through the country, but I prayed his grace now to allow me to go home, as it did ill become me to be at a wedding so soon after my dear father's death.

"This year of 1581 I begin in God's name my Hofmeister service. May He grant that I may pass it more quietly than the last, and help me out of all my difficulties and troubles.

"Since I have now proposed to myself to make my life other than it has been, and according to God's word, so that it may be well with me in body and soul, I pray that He may enlighten my heart, that I may know what I should do, whether I should remain in my present condition, or enter into matrimony.

"Without doubt God Almighty heard my prayer and turned my heart, so that I had a wish and desire towards marriage.

"It was now going into the fourth year that I had been often riding in and out to the house of the widow, Lady von Schellendorf, who had at many and various times done me many kind turns, and I had seen that they were a virtuous, noble family, God-fearing and pious for people of the world, and come of two old and blameless races, the Von Schellendorfs and Von Mallens. And to the daughter, the Jungfrau Margaret, I had always borne a particular love and affection, and she had now waited for me four years, though she had no certainty from me, and she could in that time have had many honourable wooers.

"I proposed to myself, then, as I have said, in the beginning of this year '81, to order my life according to

God's law, and on the holy Christmas morning I made in the church my prayer to God, and begged that He would put it into my heart, whether I should set about the Christian work and woo the Jungfrau Margaret von Schellendorf. And I can truly say that, during the sermon, it came into my mind as if some one had whispered it into my ear, 'Take the Duke with you and go out in a sledge and sue for the damsel; if you do not go to-morrow you will not get her.' But I put it out of my mind and thought nothing more of it that day. But in the night I heard the same thing, as if it had been said to me again. Now during this night it had snowed thickly, but in the morning I went to my lord Duke Henry, and begged that he would be so gracious as to go out with me to Herrnsdorf, which he directly agreed to do, saying, 'What's in the wind, Hans? you mean to take me to your sweetheart?' And thereupon as his grace had guessed it, I confessed and told him, with a kind of trembling, my purpose, and how matters had stood between me and the maiden for four years, and begged his grace for advice what I should do. Now his grace loved to help in wooings and marriages, and so he did not at all advise me against it, but the contrary, that I should go.

"And so he went out with me to Herrnsdorf with four sledges and twelve horsemen, and I begged that he would be so gracious as to sue for me to the mother of the maiden that she should give her to me. And it was not a quarter of an hour after we got there before his grace comes to me and says, 'Make merry, Hans, the maiden is yours;' and truly I did as he bade me and was right merry and joyful, and the two other suitors who were there had to give way and went off early the next morning, and I kept the place alone. It was now six weeks and three days to Shrovetide, and I was very earnest that the wedding might be before then, but the mother would by no means have it, and it was only after many excuses that she would agree that in three weeks and one day, that is, on the 28th of January, should be the betrothal."

On the evening before this important occasion, Hans had invited as many friends as he could muster, and had six tables full of nobles, including of course the princely

grace, and on the following morning, four gentlemen were sent off according to custom with four-and-twenty mounted attendants to the house of the bride to fetch her, and then Hans rode out to meet them as they returned also with a great troop of horsemen, besides the trumpets and kettle-drums which seem to have been indispensable on all such occasions; and the merry humour of the company was further testified by their firing above a hundred shots at an old windmill as they passed. When the betrothal took place the bridegroom it seems was expected to make a speech, and Hans mentions with some self-complacency what a long one he made, entering into all the circumstances that had induced him to this step; the virtue and constancy of the young lady; her old and honourable family, &c.; and he assures us it was received by the company with great applause as the finest and longest oration they had ever heard from a bridegroom.

Having now at last made up his mind to this desperate step, our knight is all impatience for the conclusion, but the future mamma-in-law declares it cannot be before Easter, for she has not made sufficient preparation, and, moreover, her house is not large enough to accommodate in the wintry weather the number of guests who are to be invited; but his grace hearing of the difficulty offers his palace at Leignitz for the celebration of the wedding, but does not forget a characteristic stipulation, namely, that the bride's mother is to pay the expenses of the entertainment; as well as that the bridegroom shall take all the trouble, so that his grace may not be at all molested.

And now Hans had to betake himself to Breslau to lay in a stock of clothes and finery for himself, his bride, and his serving-men, whom he chose to dress in red and white. And we hear among his purchases of gray satin and silver lace, crimson velvet, plumes of feathers and many beavers, the names of which we will pass over, not having the least idea what they mean. Then he "had to think of the eating and the drinking," and we feel rather surprised that he has failed to give us the bill of fare.

He does so on another similar occasion, the marriage of a Sir Wilhelm von Rosenberg, a Bohemian, from which we may form some idea of the magnitude of the scale on

which preparations for supplying the appetites of the company were made. This wedding, it is true, is the subject of especial admiration for the grandeur of its style, but we hear of 113 deer, 2292 hares, 1579 calves, 17,000 fish, large and small, 370 oxen, 3550 geese, 12,887 fowls, &c., besides mountains of sweets and rivers of wine and beer.

One circumstance connected with the wedding is worthy of mention, implying that the old feudal exactions were not yet abolished. The peasants of Mertschutz were invited to the wedding of the lord of the castle, and presented him on that occasion with fifty dollars, "wherewith I was well content."

When all things were prepared for the ceremony Hans and his friends left his lodgings, "in the fashion of a Lanzknecht," with drums and fifes, and proceeded to the palace, where they were received with kettle drums and trumpets, and her grace then led the bridegroom to the great hall, where he found the bride and her ladies all dressed in green and silver, the duchess leading in the bride. The "Rose Chamber" in the palace was assigned to the bridal pair. \* \* \* \* We cannot follow the knight through all the details of his wedding, which are given with the naïveté of the old time. There were of course great doings in the way of eating and drinking, —eight tables of nobles, besides the great princely one,—in the evening "a mummery," in which Hans was dressed "in the fashion of a heathen," with all sorts of coloured tinsel, and great merriment throughout, notwithstanding some attempt at disturbance by that malicious daughter of Frau Kittlitz, who pretended that she some time ago had a ring as a token of true love from the bridegroom, though every body knew it was only a fairing, such as gallant young gentlemen were in the habit of offering to their feminine acquaintance. The autobiographer, however, draws a moral from the circumstance, for the benefit of posterity, and says: "But let young men beware of giving rings lightly to young damsels, for there is no knowing what may come of it." The rejoicings were kept up for many days, and then the whole party, including the duke and duchess, were invited to Mertschutz. In the evening there was another mummery, in which we notice

among the dramatis personæ, three monks and three nuns, and as a matter of course there was great feasting and toping, at the commencement of which his princely grace hung his hat upon a peg, saying "There hangs the prince, and now here sits the jolly good fellow," and as far as goodness consists in jollity, certainly his grace does not appear to have been found wanting.

What little we have further to say of him, may as well be said here. After living a life little if at all better than that of a highway robber, for a few years longer, and involving his little dominions in a war, by refusing to submit to the decrees of the Emperor and the Diet, he was finally taken prisoner, and like his father, placed in custodia, Hans von Schweinichen having to pay for him—"not without sighs and tears," the sum of 6,000 dollars, for which he had at different times been security for him, and which he could now very ill spare from the wants of his own family. Some time afterwards the Duke escaped from his prison and made his way to Poland, where he died of an inflammatory fever; but did not for some time "rest in peace," for there was great difficulty in getting him buried. The King of Poland declined the honour of performing his obsequies, and wrote to request the Emperor to undertake them. The Emperor said it was out of the question that he should do it, for it was well known that the Duke had been a rebel. Duke Frederick of Liegnitz then ordered that the body should be stowed away as quietly as possible at Cracow—but no church or monastery would receive it, for this was a Protestant body, and all these were of the true Catholic faith. At last a Silesian leather dresser who happened to be in the place, took on himself the charge of the remains, and induced the superior of a Mendicant order to allow them to be placed in a small chapel of theirs, till some more stately funeral should be performed; but in order that the monks might not pull the heretic body out again, as they threatened, it was found expedient to have the chapel entirely walled up, and Duke Frederick and another member of the family sent the monks a hundred dollars as compensation for the damage done to the sanctity of their convent. The chapel

was afterwards walled up still more strongly, for it was reported that a miracle had taken place in it—the earth having refused to receive the body, and repeatedly thrown it out, so that it had been left at last above ground, where it is believed it still is.

For our friend Hans, it may be satisfactory to know, that the bonds of love knit on that 13th of February, 1581, stood the wear and tear of many years, and were none the worse, nay better for the trial—and that allowing for such passing clouds as mortals may not hope to escape, we may say of him in the accustomed formula, that he “lived happily ever after.”

His autobiography besides its interest as a curious contribution to the history of manners, has the merit of preserving for us what we may regard as a fossil specimen of an extinct species. Other virtues may flourish now which were unknown to that age, but the simple true hearted self forgetting service of the old time, will, it is to be feared, scarcely be seen any more.

THE END.



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